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FAMINE RELIEF IN ETHIOPIA: AN UPDATE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 8, 1990

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FAMINE RELIEF IN ETHIOPIA: AN UPDATE

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 1990

House of Representatives,
International Task Force,
Select Committee on Hunger,
Washington, DC.

The task force met, pursuant to call, at 10:10 a.m., in room 210, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Byron L. Dorgan [chairman of the task force] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Hall, Ackerman, McNulty, Wheat, Gilman, and Wolf.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BYRON L. DORGAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. Dorgan. We will call the hearing this morning to order.

In late February when the House held hearings on Ethiopian famine we heard expert testimony that unless urgent international relief action were taken, up to 5 million people would be at risk of starvation.

We were told that there was a looming danger that hundreds of thousands of people would soon abandon their villages and begin a fruitless search for food that could well end in refugee camps where disease would be rife.

Both the administration and private witnesses told us then that the famine could be as bad as the horror of 1984–85.

Our worst fears have so far not come true, and that's the good news.

If the emergency were over, I would spend considerable time congratulating those whose efforts so far have saved thousands of lives.

I certainly do commend those responsible for moving increasing quantities of food on the Southern Corridor and other areas. This has helped to stave off a disaster at least temporarily.

But despite all our efforts on these routes, I fear that once the rains come, turn roads into quagmires, and slow food convoys, thousands will be trapped without adequate food stocks.

This could happen if the best channel of food relief, the port of Massawa, remains closed. And because continued fighting risks interrupting relief operations.

The recent escalation of fighting in the north, and the Ethiopian Government's continued bombing of Massawa are a cause of deep concern in Congress. So, too, is the lack of progress in getting peace talks going.

That concern is reflected in House Resolution 384 which has strong bipartisan support.

It calls on President Bush:

To urge all parties to the conflict to agree to a cease-fire, allow the United Nations to coordinate relief, and permit free passage of food through all channels, including the port of Massawa and; to enlist President Gorbachev's assistance, and to press various countries to end external military aid.

Through this period of intense U.S.-Soviet diplomatic dialog leading up to the summit, we in Congress consider the issue of ending the war and famine in Ethiopia to be a prime subject for consideration and action.

Finally, as H. Res. 384 indicates, we believe the United States should weigh punitive steps if the Government of Ethiopia continues to block food relief.

We have a chance—repeat, chance—that if we exert maximum, high level pressure on the parties to fully cooperate in food relief, we can turn a looming tragedy into a successful humanitarian rescue.

We would like this morning to hear from the first two witnesses. Before that I would like to ask whether my colleagues, Mr. Ackerman and Mr. McNulty, have an opening statement?

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. Ackerman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to congratulate and thank you for your continuing efforts in focusing world attention on this very, very important issue. And also to welcome our two witnesses, Director Natsios and Secretary Cohen.

I just recently returned from a trip to Ethiopia where I was able to meet with Foreign Minister Tesfaye Dinka as well as President Mengistu for some length.

I tried to drive home the perspective of yourself, Mr. Chairman, this committee, and the secretaries and that of our Government as far as the humanitarian aid efforts and the opening of the port of Massawa.

The rhetoric has been pretty high on that issue and, hopefully, we will all continue to keep everybody's feet to the fire and perhaps that issue might be resolved. It is my hope that the sooner that happens, the easier it is for the international community and everybody else to get relief supplies to innocent starving people.

I particularly want to single out Secretary Cohen for his tremendous dedication to this and all humanitarian efforts. When, hopefully, the final chapter of this sorry episode is written, he will be saluted as one of the real heroes of this sad story.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dorgan. Mr. McNulty.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. McNulty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to echo the sentiments which have been expressed by both you and by my colleague Gary Ackerman. I am one of the newer members of the committee. Last year I had the opportunity to visit the Horn with Mickey Leland, Bill Emerson, and Gary Ackerman. We concentrated at that time on the Sudan. The situation in Sudan is still very critical this year, but we seem to have focused more on Ethiopia because the situation there has deteriorated so rapidly.

I know that today, Mr. Chairman, we will talk a lot about the logistics, providing relief supplies in the form of food, and medical supplies, but I hope that we will also focus on the need to bring peace to the region.

We had a meeting last week in Chairman Hall's office. It was a somewhat disturbing meeting to me because there was a high-ranking official of the Ethiopian Government present and the chairman of the full committee made a very simple request: He asked if a proposal were made for a cease-fire for a very limited period of time—just a period of weeks—whether that would be considered by the Ethiopian Government .

The answer was one word: "No." It wasn't "maybe," it wasn't that "perhaps we can work it out; there's some way of negotiating." The answer was simply "No."

That's very deeply disturbing because it is my very firm belief that until there is a cease-fire, the relief efforts will be very, very severely hampered and many, many thousands of people will suffer and die.

I would express the hope that the officials of our Government, in particular our outstanding Secretary Cohen, will see to it that the officials of the U.S. Government use whatever influence they have to achieve an end to the fighting in the region, even if it's temporary, in order to make these relief efforts even moderately successful.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. McNulty, thank you very much.

Let me echo the words of Mr. McNulty and Mr. Ackerman for Mr. Cohen and Mr. Natsios—the issue here, the task here is to save lives. And all of us who work on hunger issues know that, while political problems often linger over the long term, you don't eat in the long term; getting food is a daily problem for people in the world who face a very severe crisis. And the wrenching, gripping spectacle of famine in Africa—a picture that has occurred before, and one that looms in front of us now—is something that none of us can turn away from. And the particular energy that has been brought to this task by Mr. Cohen and Mr. Natsios is much appreciated.

We would like now to hear the testimony of Mr. Cohen, who I believe has been to the region very recently. Mr. Cohen, if you would begin and then we would hear testimony from Mr. Natsios. Mr. Natsios is Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, and Mr. Cohen is Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

Mr. Cohen, you may proceed.

STATEMENT OF HERMAN J. COHEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. **Cohen**. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I think it's important that the tragedy of the Ethiopian internal conflict be kept in the public eye.

I have submitted a longer statement for the record. Right now I would like to do a brief overview of the political, military, and relief situations.

Since the February 28 hearings, the Ethiopian Government situation has not improved. Fighting in Eritrea has been very severe, resulting in many casualties on both sides. But the government has not regained any significant amount of territory. The attempt to retake Massawa failed. The EPLF may not be able to follow up its advantage in the near term, so there could be a stalemate for many months.

Though the recent combat has had little effect on relief around Asmara and Massawa, some relief routes are now in operation. Food is being trucked into Wello and Tigray through the so-called southern line, supplied via the port of Assab. To date, about 8,000 metric tons have been delivered this way, and supplies are being delivered to certain areas via Sudan.

Nevertheless, until we can use the port of Massawa, we cannot be reasonably sure of our ability to feed all the hungry in all parts of Ethiopia.

On April 24, the major Western donor countries made a statement of principles regarding the relief effort. The statement underlined the need for all parties to "ensure the availability of the relevant ports and airfields;" and to refrain from attacks on vehicles delivering humanitarian supplies.

The U.N. Secretary General, on April 26, announced that the Government of Ethiopia is willing to discuss additional food corridors as well as an enhanced U.N. role in operation and monitoring of Ethiopian food relief generally.

Last week, Secretary of State Baker proposed to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that we cooperate in an airlift of food supplies to Asmara. We are now awaiting Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's response.

We welcome all of these steps and are pressing Addis to begin these discussions with the U.N. promptly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Cohen, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cohen appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 41.]

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Natsios.

STATEMENT OF ANDREW NATSIOS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. **Natsios**. Chairman Dorgan and members of the Select Committee on Hunger, I am pleased to appear before you again to review the status of the relief efforts in northern Ethiopia.

As Assistant Secretary Cohen has just stated, we have made considerable progress in moving food into the famine areas of Tigray and Eritrea. Deliveries along the southern line from the government-controlled port of Assab through Dese and north into rebel-held Tigray have reached 8,000 metric tons a month. We expect this to increase to 15,000 metric tons a month soon.

The Joint Relief Partnership, the JRP, which is operating the food convoys from Dese, is presently stockpiling food in Mekele and other locations until stocks reach a level which will allow general distribution to begin.

The food moving into Tigray has allayed our worst fears. We now have two eyewitness accounts from trained relief officials, with no political agendas, on conditions on the ground in Tigray. They report that because of the effective work of REST, the Tigrayian relief agency, in transporting food from Sudan and from surplus areas in western and southern Tigray, there have been no mass movements of people in search of food and no starvation.

The situation is quite precarious, however, because these sources of food are so tenuous almost no food is being stockpiled in the famine areas other than the small amounts managed by JRP.

The rainy season has not yet begun, and when it does, in mid-June, the rains will significantly reduce the amount of relief food that can move into Tigray.

We are receiving similar reports regarding conditions in Eritrea. The Eritrean rebels' relief organization is also moving significant amounts of food into Eritrea and the population is not at immediate risk. However, like Tigray, the relief effort in Eritrea will also be slowed by the rains beginning in mid-June.

We continue to be very concerned about the food situation in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, which remains under the control of the Ethiopian Government.

The city, which is surrounded by rebel forces, is almost completely dependent upon resupply by airlifts from Addis Ababa. The population of the city has grown as a large influx of people has entered the city to escape the fighting.

The JRP continues to operate five distribution centers in Asmara and occasionally provides food to some of the other smaller neighboring towns which remain in government hands. The JRP is targeting a population of 237,000 displaced and destitute people. On-hand food stocks can only keep the JRP operation supplied for perhaps another month.

Because of this situation, we are planning to join with the other donors through the United Nations World Food Program to support a limited airlift of food and fuel into Asmara. A.I.D., through our office, expects to contribute $1 million toward this effort. And as Secretary Cohen has just mentioned, the United States proposes that the Soviets provide some planes for that airlift.

The threat to the people of Asmara demonstrates very clearly how tenuous the situation remains in northern Ethiopia. While existing food stocks and arriving supplies are keeping the situation from becoming critical, there is no margin for error. For this reason, the reopening of Massawa port for relief shipments remains our principal diplomatic objective in an Ethiopia famine response.

I am very concerned that the success of the southern route has created the impression that we have met the challenge of moving food into the north. We have not. I am afraid this perception may lead to a reduction in efforts to continue to press the Government of Ethiopia and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front—EPLF—to reopen Massawa for relief shipments.

We recently joined the Government of Canada, the European Community and other donors in issuing a statement of principles regarding relief in Ethiopia.

This statement, which has been endorsed by the Soviet Union, calls upon the Government of Ethiopia and the insurgents to open all appropriate ports for relief. I hope this strong consensus on the need to reopen Massawa can be maintained and will enable the world community to bring sufficient pressure on Addis and the EPLF to cooperate.

One final issue I would like to raise concerns donor coordination. We work cooperatively with other food donors on emergencies such as the one we face in Ethiopia to coordinate shipments of food relief to ensure orderly deliveries. In previous Ethiopian droughts, in 1984 and 1987, the United States committed itself to provide one-third of the food assistance required. In both cases, however, when the final tonnages delivered were calculated, the U.S. contribution exceeded 40 percent. This year, the U.S. Government has already pledged to date 266,632 metric tons, or over 40 percent of the approximately 528,000 metric tons pledged by all donors. So the pattern is repeating itself.

I raise this because I am concerned other donors are not assuming as large a share of the relief burden as they have in previous years. Food shipments arriving in Ethiopia are not keeping pace with the commitments other donors have made.

We share the frustration many donors feel regarding the problems in Ethiopia. I believe we must continue to do all we can to meet the emergency food requirements in Ethiopia this year, and I believe we can be successful if we continue pressing our current strategy.

I appreciate the interest and concern this committee has shown in the efforts we have been making in Ethiopia. I hope we can count on your continued support.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Natsios appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 45.]

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Natsios, thank you very much.

Let me ask about the potential for Soviet cooperation in an airlift. Did you indicate that the Soviets have committed some airplanes?

Mr. NATSIOS. They have not committed airplanes. I guess Minister Shevardnadze will make a formal reply to Secretary Baker's proposal. Our informal information is that the Soviets would be interested. They have six Antinovs in Ethiopia now, but they want an absolute guarantee from the EPLF that no one is going to shoot at the planes; and I certainly don't blame them for wanting that guarantee.

So we call upon the EPLF to make a commitment that the airlift would be permitted—it would be American grain that would be put onto relief planes, hopefully Soviet planes, and the U.N. would be running the system so that we could make sure that only relief supplies are going into Asmara. But we would make a request now of the EPLF to make a public commitment that, should the Soviets make a commitment of planes, we will be guaranteed they will not be shot at.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Have you, prior to this time, asked the EPLF for that type of commitment, and not received it?

Mr. **Natsios**. We haven't received a commitment formally from the Soviets for the airlift. I'm kind of jump-starting this proposal by mentioning this now, but since we have a limited amount of time, I thought I would mention it today.

We have informally told the EPLF of the possibility of this happening. But we have made no formal approach to them yet. As soon as we hear from Minister Shevardnadze, we will do that.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Cohen, could you give us both your assessment of the worst case scenario and the best case scenario of what could happen here?

The worst case, if the rainy season comes and we have trouble using the truck route. Also, we are not, for reasons that Mr. Natsios just described, able to get cooperation on safe corridors for air travel.

What is the worst case scenario and what is the best case scenario of what might happen in Ethiopia in the coming months, based on your having been there and evaluated the situation?

Mr. **Cohen**. I would say the best case scenario would be an agreement by both the Ethiopian Government and the EPLF that the port of Massawa should be placed under an international control regime purely for the purpose of delivering food without prejudice to the legal status of Massawa without prejudice to the political outcome of the Eritrean war.

Then that opening, plus a continuous supply from Sudan and the southern route, would see the country through the worst period of potential famine.

The worst case would be the continued closure of Massawa and an inability to get an agreement on opening Massawa under U.N. auspices; a cutting of the road from Assab due to the war probably by TPLF action; and increased bombing of the vehicles coming from all sources, which could certainly cause many millions of people to be at extreme risk and would require a very expensive airlift to some of the most remote areas. I'm not quite sure the international community would even have the capability of doing that.

Mr. **Dorgan**. The opening of the port of Massawa is critical to try to relieve this pressure; is that correct?

Mr. **Cohen**. It is critical, for two reasons: Although we do have more optimistic views right now of the capability of the southern route, and other routes seem to be producing more capacity than we had expected, we cannot be sure that these routes will fulfill all the requirements, especially with the rainy season coming on, and all of the difficulties in road transport in the rainy season.

In addition, the Massawa route is far less costly than other routes; and we do have to face the fact that the international community is running out of resources for all of the famine disaster and refugee situations around the world.

So many of these conflicts in Africa and elsewhere are conducted with impunity in the sense that nobody has to worry about refugees or starving. The international community is automatically taking care of them. So the combatants just go blithely around fighting, not caring. I think the time has come to tell everyone that we just don't have enough money for the continued expansion of relief. Relief is not a growth industry. The politicians on all sides of these conflicts should begin to understand that.

Mr. DORGAN. The growing tragedy, of course, is that as the number of refugees increases, the amount per capita available from the international community to respond to that is decreasing very dramatically. So the plight of the refugee is not static at this point; it is exacerbated by the fact that less and less money has become available per capita to deal with these refugees.

Let me ask about the upcoming summit. It seems to me that is an important time for our President and the President of the Soviet Union to deal directly with this question.

Is it your anticipation that this issue will be part of the summit?

Mr. COHEN. Yes, Mr. Chairman. In all of our high level, bilateral discussions with the Soviet Union, what we call regional issues are always on the agenda, and Ethiopia is one of the most significant regional issues of U.S.-Soviet joint concern, and I'm sure it will be discussed.

Mr. DORGAN. Can you give me a description of what has been happening in Massawa within the last 2 to 4 weeks? I understand there has been recent fighting in Massawa?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, there was a major military effort on the part of the Ethiopian Government to retake the port, involving—if my memory is correct—approximately 30,000 troops, trying to advance to Massawa from the Asmara region from three separate directions.

The battle was very fierce and there were major casualties on both sides. The offensive was unable to retake the port. And one of the three columns was cut off by the EPLF and appears to be now in very dire straits.

However, the EPLF, having suffered major casualties, is not likely to be able to capitalize on this victory to drive the Ethiopians out of the Eritrea completely; so we are likely to have a stalemate.

There was heavy bombing of the port, but we do not have precise information as to the port's capabilities at this time. It would require technicians to go in there and do a survey.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Natsios, my understanding of what the EPLF have said publicly generally leads me to believe that they would accept some sort of safe corridor for an airlift. And I'm, of course, just making assumptions based on what I've heard, but——

Mr. NATSIOS. They have said that but that did not involve any Soviet planes. And given the position the Soviets have taken in the conflict, they may have a different view if you add the Soviet component to it. They have said that they would agree at one point to an airlift.

Mr. DORGAN. I must say that the prospect of American grain being transported in Soviet planes in a relief operation, an airlift to Asmara, would really reflect the best instincts of everybody. I hope we can get folks to agree to do this. The best we can do around the world is to help people who are in trouble.

One other question. My understanding is the truck route that we now use, the southern route from Assab all the way up to Asmara, is about 900 miles long; is it?

Mr. NATSIOS. It's a long route, and it's very expensive for a variety of reasons.

Mr. DORGAN. And if the port of Massawa were open, it would be a very brief passage to Asmara and into other food needy areas in the Eritrean region?

Mr. NATSIOS. The road is in much better condition as well.

Mr. DORGAN. It's a 10th or a 20th of the length of the southern route; is that right?

Mr. NATSIOS. That's right.

Mr. DORGAN. It's a dramatic change.

I know others on the panel want to ask questions. I have another question or two; I'll ask at the end.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

While I was in Ethiopia it was my intent to fly north to view the trucks that were going to be embarking on the distribution of relief supplies. About 6 hours before departure, everything thing was cancelled and all flights out were cancelled, as it was reported that the Tigrayans had knocked out the electricity and the power stations.

There seems to be a tremendous amount of residual strength judging from the duration of both of the EPLF and TPLF conflicts, the number of years that they are going on.

If, indeed, the troop strength is so much less than that of the Ethiopian Government, do we have any idea as to who is supplying and resupplying both of their armies?

Mr. COHEN. The vast bulk of military assistance to the Ethiopian Government army comes from the Soviet Union.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Right.

When I say "both," I mean the EPLF and the TPLF.

Mr. COHEN. I'm sorry. Our information about the source is not very good, Congressman. We know that there is a lot of supplies are purchased in international arms markets and that the EPLF is heavily funded by the Eritrean diaspora, much of which is in the Middle East, some of which is in the United States. And with money you can purchase arms—if you have access to the ocean—you can purchase arms virtually anywhere.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Do we know which nations or group of nations might be selling them the arms?

Mr. COHEN. We have no precise data on that, no.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would just want to thank you and just speak over you, if I can, for half a minute, and just repeat publicly what I have told some of the principals and parties to this conflict in private, and that is, that the international community is running low on resources; have a lot of people on this planet to be concerned about; and are doing a rather remarkable job, all factors considered. People are running out of patience.

The peoples of this country and the world who are concerned do not want to see the limited resources that are left that we wish to use to help starving people with jammed up in ports, blown up in caravans, going to complete waste. The world is coming to the conclusion that while you people are politically quibbling, your children are starving to death. And before they look elsewhere to see where they might spend their limited largesse, I think it's time for you guys to really sit down to both back away from what's going on in the port, to swallow your pride, and to save your children.

Under the leadership of the chairman and with the help of this committee, maybe we can encourage you to look at that afresh.

Thank you.

Mr. DORGAN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I regret that I am going to have to run on to another meeting that's meeting at the same time. But I certainly want to welcome our panelists.

I'd like to ask Mr. Cohen about the report that we've received, there's some 50,000 metric tons of Public Law 480 food is on the high seas on the way to Pakistan and Bangladesh and there's some talk of diverting it to Ethiopia.

Could you tell us what sort of programs in Pakistan and Bangladesh that food was supporting and what sort of foodstuffs that there are; and is this true that some of it is going to be diverted?

Mr. COHEN. I will defer to Mr. Natsios for that, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Mr. NATSIOS. That decision, Congressman, has not yet been made; it is under consideration. There is 50,000 metric tons of food on the high seas now scheduled for Bangladesh and Pakistan. It is not—I repeat, not—emergency food, which is to say there's no immediate need for it; so the shipment could be diverted to Ethiopia and the 50,000 metric tons could be replaced in a subsequent shipment; which is what's being considered now. But again, a decision has not yet been made.

Mr. GILMAN. What foodstuffs are these that are being considered?

Mr. NATSIOS. I beg your pardon?

Mr. GILMAN. What are the foodstuffs that are being considered that are——

Mr. NATSIOS. You mean what's on the ships?

Mr. GILMAN. Yes.

Mr. NATSIOS. It is bulk wheat.

Mr. GILMAN. What program was that——

Mr. NATSIOS. I think it's under title II, but I'm not certain. I don't run the food program so I'm not as familiar with the details of the shipments.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

You may have touched on this before I came into the hearing; what would you estimate is the maximum capacity for food supplies that are using the Assab-Dese route?

Mr. NATSIOS. We're hoping that the capacity could be increased to 15,000 metric tons a month. It is now at about 8,000. We have actually delivered over 10,000 metric tons, but it's been operating for more than a month. If you extrapolated the figures of what we've been able to do over the last few weeks, we could reach 8,000 metric tons a month, but we hope it will go up to 15,000 very shortly.

Mr. **Gilman**. Can you tell us what the prospects are for opening the port of Massawa for international relief operations?

Mr. **Natsios**. The prospects are entirely in the hands at this point of the EPLF and the Ethiopian Government. The EPLF has indicated it would allow relief supplies to come through the port but the Ethiopian Government must agree to stop bombing the port, because no ships are going to dock in that port in the middle of a war.

Even if we get the port cleared, we also have to get a secure land route out of the port down to Asmara and then south and into Eritrea and Tigray. So we must get both the port secured from bombing as well as the road leading out of the port; and that has not yet been agreed to.

Mr. **Gilman**. Has there been any discussion about using an airlift into the affected regions?

Mr. **Natsios**. Yes, the United Nations is now organizing an airlift and we have made a commitment that we will contribute $1 million toward the airlift. The British have made financial commitments, as well as other donors. I expect it will begin in the next few weeks.

Mr. **Gilman**. How extensive would the supply be? How many people could be reached by an airlift?

Mr. **Natsios**. It will be into Asmara and the surrounding villages that are still under government control. We are insisting that the airlift cover not just the city of Asmara. There are certainly problems there, but there are greater problems in the smaller villages surrounding the city. We want to ensure that some of that food gets out to those villages as well.

Mr. **Gilman**. Thank you.

For the record, would you be able to inform us at a later date just exactly what programs in Pakistan and Bangladesh?

Mr. **Natsios**. We will do that, Congressman.

Mr. **Gilman**. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask that be made part of the record.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

Consideration was given to diversion of two separate Public Law 480 title II shipments of wheat to meet urgent needs in Ethiopia. The wheat in question was for ongoing programs in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Each country had a sufficient commodity pipeline to adjust for delays inherent in the proposed diversion. After further review of the overall Ethiopia pipeline, including that from other donors, it was determined that the diversion was not necessary.

CARE operates a sizable Food-for-Work Program in Bangladesh with Public Law 480 title II wheat. CARE's authorized shipping level for fiscal year 1990 is 95,000 metric tons; therefore, temporary diversion of the 25,000 metric ton shipment in question would not have disrupted program implementation. Similarly, the World Food Program (WFP) uses title II wheat to support feeding requirements of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The WFP's authorized shipping level for fiscal year 1990 is 80,000 metric tons.

Mr. **Gilman**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to go ahead.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Gilman, thank you very much.

Mr. McNulty.

Mr. **McNulty**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Cohen, in response to a question by Congressman Ackerman, you indicated we don't really have a handle on exactly where the military assistance to the EPLF and the TPLF is coming from. We do, however, know who the main military supplier for the Ethiopian Government is.

Could you comment on the current status of the level of military assistance from the Soviet Union to the Government of Ethiopia?

It is my general perception that level of military support is declining, and I would like to know if that's a correct perception?

Mr. COHEN. Mr. McNulty, the Soviets tell us that their aid is tapering off and we have indications that this is accurate.

We continue to press them to diminish their aid and we think they are responding to that.

It also is quite clear that their direct involvement in the war is decreasing. They no longer have advisers in the war zones themselves and have substantially reduced the number of military advisers in-country. So there is a decline in general, that's correct.

Mr. MCNULTY. Do you believe that decline is substantial?

Mr. COHEN. I believe it is significant.

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Secretary, as a follow-up to my opening statement, would you comment on what you think the leverage is that the U.S. Government might have in getting the combatants together to talk about at least a cease-fire, and then an eventual peace? What leverage does the United States have? What influence could we bring to bear in order to achieve that end?

Mr. COHEN. Congressman, our leverage is limited. We provide military assistance to nobody. Our relations with the Government of Ethiopia have not been very good since the revolution. The possibility of our improving relations could constitute a certain amount of leverage, but I think it's still minimal.

We have communications with the EPLF which seem to indicate a certain amount of confidence in our neutrality in our disinterested position there. So I think among all external factors, the fact that we have purely a humanitarian objective, the fact that we seem to be neutral in the conflict, gives us a certain moral leverage, but not much more than that.

Mr. MCNULTY. I understand.

Then, finally, Mr. Secretary, looking out into the future, assuming that the combatants could be brought to a negotiating table, what would you see as a possible long-term political solution within the government in order to accommodate the differing interests from the north?

Mr. COHEN. The EPLF is fighting to restore the legitimate rights of the Eritrean people, which were established by U.N. Resolution 390 in 1952, which in effect joined Eritrea with Ethiopia with maximum autonomous status for the people of Eritrea, which included their own parliament. This was illegally abrogated by the Ethiopian Government in 1962.

It seems to me, as a minimum, this regional autonomy must be restored. The United States continues to believe in a unified Ethiopia. We're opposed to dismemberment of Ethiopia. But we feel that within a united Ethiopia, an autonomous Eritrea, which can express its own ethnic identity, is vital.

On the question of the Tigrayan grievance, which is also very important, I believe this is related to the nature of the Government of Ethiopia itself, which, since the revolution, has been extremely authoritarian and overly centralized. The solution lies in an opening of that government in a democratization of that government so that the people of Tigray can feel that they have an interest in a unified Ethiopia where their needs are being met, both from a political and an economic and social point of view.

Mr. McNULTY. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, and thank you, Mr. Natsios.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Could I just follow up on that question?

Have we officially made our position, that you just enunciated, clear to the Ethiopians that we believe there should be some kind of confederation between Ethiopia and Eritrea?

Mr. COHEN. Yes, Mr. Ackerman, we have said this repeatedly to the Ethiopian Government that we believe the answer lies in a strong dose of autonomy for the people of Eritrea.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Have they expressed any public interest in that?

Mr. COHEN. The Ethiopian Government has not said anything in public, but we believe that they are not necessarily opposed to that concept.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Wolf.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for having these hearings.

Mr. Dorgan, I also welcome the witnesses and thank them for their diligent and consistent effort with regard to this problem.

I guess based on what you're saying, the opening of the port of Massawa is the key. If you could unlock that key, you could pretty much solve the problem on a short-term basis?

Mr. COHEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOLF. Has there been anybody from the U.S. Government in that region recently, into Massawa?

Mr. COHEN. No, sir, nobody.

Mr. WOLF. How many people are at risk today in Ethiopia, right today, as we now speak?

Mr. NATSIOS. It's impossible to know precisely, Congressman, because there's a war going on and there are population movements. For example, there are substantial inflows of people into Asmara and the surrounding towns who were trying to escape the fighting. We're not sure precisely how many people are involved in that movement; and that will affect how many people are at risk because there are more people at risk in that area than any other area right now in northern Ethiopia.

In terms of the total need, the United Nations and the other donors have gradually scaled back the aggregate food needs based on the fact that the rains were quite good fairly recently, and the situation in northern Wello is not as bad as we had initially assumed.

When the southern line opened up 5 weeks ago, an Ethiopian Roman Catholic priest, who is one of the leaders of the Joint Relief Partnership, which is running the food deliveries, went up with one of the trucks. He went into Tigray and into northern Wello to see exactly what was going on; and he found that the situation was better than we had anticipated.

I mention in my testimony two trained relief administrators had visited northern Ethiopia; he's one of the two. We had a second one go in and give exactly the same report. So with those two reports, we're now fairly confident that the estimate we gave earlier in the year, which was between 3 and 4.9 million people, is too high. We now estimate that about 3 million people are at risk. The food needs are not the 750,000 tons that we had earlier estimated would be necessary to feed people, but the needs are closer to 600,000 tons.

Mr. **Wolf**. So it's better than you thought, but it's still very bad?

Mr. **Natsios**. The problem is 3 million people are still at risk. The difficulty we're having is we don't have access to the principal port through which the food should be coming. Until Massawa is opened, none of us can sleep comfortably at night because anything could happen—the rains could be particularly bad; the roads could wash out; and the whole relief effort could collapse because it's on such very tenuous ground right now.

Mr. **Wolf**. Is there any indication of how many people are dying a week?

Mr. **Natsios**. No, no one is dying right now. There may be isolated areas where a person here or there dies. There are no reports from the eyewitness observers we had of severe malnutrition, mass starvation, or mass population movements. There are no reports in any of those three categories. There's always some malnutrition in any developing country, particularly in Ethiopia with the food situation as it is.

We're talking about malnutrition at the last stage of starvation. We are not seeing that from any of our reports. And one of the reports we had was from a skilled relief expert who traveled all over Tigray. So I am fairly confident that we are not witnessing any large number of deaths in Eritrea or Tigray right now.

But, again, there are no food stores. If the relief routes are interrupted, we will see that happen. The rains start in mid-June and the transport of foodstuffs, which are just barely adequate to meet the needs, will have to slow down because the roads will become impassable.

Mr. **Wolf**. Would opening of the port in Massawa be effective in mid-June? Will there still be roads out of there that you can use?

Mr. **Natsios**. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. **Wolf**. Is there any other major idea that has not been thought of outside government channels that could encourage the Ethiopians to open up the port.

Mr. **Natsios**. I'll leave Secretary Cohen to answer that.

Mr. **Cohen**. When I saw the Secretary General of the EPLF recently in the field, I urged him to declare Massawa an open city so that it could be demilitarized and used exclusively for humanitarian aid.

He quickly agreed to that. So I think the major problem right now in Massawa is on the side of the Ethiopian Government, which feels that it cannot allow anything to happen which would prejudice the legal status of Massawa. The Ethiopian Government does not wish to in effect allow Eritrea to become de facto independent in any way.

So if we could convince the Government of Ethiopia that the opening of Massawa purely for relief purposes under an international regime, purely for relief purposes, would not prejudice the legal status, I believe it might be possible. And that's what we're trying to do right now.

Mr. **Wolf**. That's done through diplomatic channels?

Mr. **Cohen**. Through diplomatic channels.

Mr. **Wolf**. Are our people speaking on a daily basis to the Ethiopian Government about this?

Mr. **Cohen**. We are speaking to them virtually daily. I was encouraged slightly by the fact that last week a representative of the Ethiopian Government met with the Secretary General of the U.N.; requested the U.N. to play a larger role in the humanitarian relief effort; and told the Secretary General that all relief corridors can be discussed, which by implication means that they are willing to discuss the opening of the port of Massawa.

Mr. **Wolf**. It does seem that history will certainly judge this, either action or lack of action; and, hopefully, the Ethiopian Government would seize this as an opportunity to demonstrate, I think its commitment to humanitarian efforts, that the world could see it. It certainly could use some positive press. And I think by declaring that an open city and doing it the way that you said, would certainly give it that.

Again, I want to thank the chairman for having these hearings, and thank both of you for your long-term, consistent, and very effective efforts.

I yield back my time.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Thank you, Mr. Wolf.

Mr. Wheat will inquire.

Mr. **Wheat**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Mr. Natsios, apparent from your testimony that the opening of the port of Massawa is clearly critical, let me approach the question from a slightly divergent view of it, if I may.

It's obvious that while the opening of the port is critical for relief efforts, it also seems to be critical in the view of the Ethiopian Government to their military effort.

Is there any indication that their military strategy or goals are changing enough that they would be willing to accept Massawa as an open city? Could that conceivably be a tenable military position for them?

Mr. **Cohen**. The Ethiopian Government is receiving its military replenishment through the port of Assab as well as their fuel supplies. So the port of Massawa is normally their main port, but they are resupplying themselves through the other way.

Their main concern about Massawa right now is the political, in effect to make sure, from their point of view, that Massawa is not the opening wedge in the independence of Eritrea and, therefore, will not acquiesce in any program that will cause Massawa to be a de facto Eritrean independent city.

So we have to persuade them that humanitarian relief is a neutral project which has no political implications. I think they are slowly coming around to understand that.

Mr. **Wheat**. When you say slowly coming around to understand—assuming that there is no breakthrough with the Ethiopian Government, how long do you think the military situation, the current stalemate in Massawa and around Asmara can go on?

Mr. **Cohen**. Congressman, we believe it can go on for months because the last battle of Massawa, which was in the last couple of weeks, so weakened both sides that neither one has the capability, in our view, of bringing the war to a conclusion. So stalemate is likely for several months, until they can both re-gather their strength for another battle.

Mr. **Wheat**. Those are all the questions I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Wheat, thank you very much.

I will recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Hall.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TONY P. HALL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. **Hall**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do have a statement for the record. I won't read it. I'd like for it to be part of the record.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hall appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 34.]

Mr. **Hall**. I thank you very much for holding these hearings. It is a very timely meeting, and a very important meeting. The select committee, as you know, has been involved with the issue of Ethiopia since its creation, both to its sorrow and, of course, to its credit.

We are saddened, as you are, to the situation that is before us. Much has changed since our last meeting. There are some encouraging signs through cross-border feeding, and convoys coming up from the south, but they are of minimum tonnage. But the dire predictions before Christmas have not come about, I think as a result of these things.

But it does appear that if major food doesn't get in through other sources that in fact there will be many famine deaths before the summer is over. So while much has changed, one tragic point remains constant and all parties in the Ethiopian conflict continue to place military victory above feeding their own people.

I find it amazing that when I have met with the representatives of the government and the rebels, as you have, and as other members of this committee have, we find ourselves in a position of having to practically beg them to feed their own people.

I think a lot of the credit for anything, any encouraging signs that are going on today, exclusively belong to the people that are in this room. I thank the people who are testifying and the people that are in the PVO community for their persistence, their diligence, and their work. But it is a very difficult situation.

I just have a couple of questions I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman.

In meeting with Mr. Kassaye, head of the Ethiopian Government's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, last week, I pressed him very carefully and very specifically on the port of Massawa . And I have reported to you that in fact he said there would be no relief there. And then I said, what if we could open it up for just 3 weeks, to get as much food in there as possible?

His answer was "No," that they were bent on the military answer.

But I would like to follow up on your evaluation. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Natsios, what is your evaluation of his organization, the RRC? And I'd like to get your feeling on the airlift to Asmara. How can we assure that the food gets to the people who need it and not to the militia?

Can we try to answer those two questions?

Mr. NATSIOS. First let me say that my comments are not a reflection on the Ethiopian Government, which I have strong opinions on myself, but only on the RRC itself. The RRC is one of the best relief agencies in Africa in terms of its management, the competence of its administrators, its planning capacity, and its ability logistically.

It is one of the most honest of all of the relief organizations in Africa. That is not to say there are not food diversions. It means the RRC is not diverting food for corrupt purposes. There are two kinds of diversions that take place in any relief operation. One is where people steal the food. There is little or no evidence that the RRC has had any problems with that sort of dishonesty.

The problem the RRC has had is with the diversion of food deliberately in a planned way for the militias—the so-called wheat militias, which are peasants who are given weapons. They are referred to as the "wheat militia" because they're paid in wheat or in sorghum for their service. They are not trained to the level that a soldier is but they work in conjunction with the Ethiopian military.

In fact one reporter from the New York Times, Jane Perlez, actually witnessed it herself several months ago where Canadian, Italian, and European Community wheat was being diverted from the relief stores and being distributed to the so-called wheat militia in Eritrea. So we know it has happened; the government denied it, but it took place. That is a different kind of diversion. That's an organized, planned sort of thing.

I have no doubt that if the RRC were independent of political pressure, it could administer a program. Our concern is that it isn't, and it is not going to be. It operates in a highly political atmosphere. Given the conflict that's going on, political leaders tend to subordinate humanitarian efforts of this sort to their political and military agendas.

So we have had a policy of not putting any food through the RRC. None has gone from American sources to the RRC in this current famine.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. I have no further comments.

Mr. HALL. Those are all the questions I have now, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Hall, thank you very much.

Mr. Cohen, Mr. Natsios, the news today is somewhat better than a month ago, and yet Mr. Natsios indicates that there are 3 million people still at risk. And events can change very rapidly in that region which could lead to substantial deterioration very quickly and pose a calamitous situation for those poor folks.

Before we relieve you of the burdens of testimony, Mr. Natsios, could you tell us what you mean specifically by "at risk"?

Describe for me what you mean when you say "3 million people are at risk."

Mr. NATSIOS. If the food that the donor nations are sending to Ethiopia is stopped; that is to say if all the routes that are providing assistance into Ethiopia stopped tomorrow, 3 million people will die. That's what we mean by 3 million people at risk.

We think it's unlikely that all sources will stop at the same time for the rest of the year. But one problem is there is very little food in storage. There's 30,000 metric tons of grain sitting in Assab, but we can't move all of that food quickly into the drought areas. As I mentioned, we hope to transport up to 15,000 tons a month, which means we have 2 months supply sitting in Assab. We also have food that will be airlifted from Assab and Addis to Asmara through an airlift that the U.N. is organizing.

But all airlifts, by their very nature, will have a limited impact because of the small amount of food that planes can carry each trip and the enormous volume that's required in this famine.

I think the pressure's off for the moment, but I want to repeat what I said before. The danger is that, because some food is being delivered through Assab into Tigray, the pressure's off now for us to force the issue of opening Massawa. That is to say, the immediate crisis is not here. The danger is that if through bad rains or through a military situation, Assab is shut off, we are going to be at risk very quickly because people will simply run out of food and start dying.

So the danger is that the short-term good news is making us a little bit too comfortable, in my view. I think the situation is very precarious, very serious. We could still see—particularly during the rainy season, which is the latter part of June, July, and August—a large number of famine deaths if we don't deliver sufficient food.

The capacities of all of the routes into the famine areas will be substantially reduced, perhaps as much as 50 percent, by the summer rains. What is barely adequate now will not be adequate in 2 months.

I would like to make a final comment. No food has gotten into the government-held areas in Eritrea since the rebel offensive began against Massawa, exactly 3 months ago today. I don't know if the February 8 EPLF attack on Massawa was a factor in selecting the hearing date, but it's well timed because it was precisely 3 months ago today that the EPLF offensive began that took Massawa.

The situation is deteriorating quite rapidly in Asmara. The city is in very serious condition. There is malnutrition. People aren't dying yet, but they are on the border. In the villages surrounding Massawa, the further out you get into government-held areas outside Asmara, the more serious the situation becomes. This is one reason the U.N. has proposed the airlift to Asmara.

We fully support it, and I think we were the first donors to make a commitment, $1 million, toward the airlift. It was the U.S. Government again that made the suggestion that the Soviets contribute aircraft to that airlift so we can get it moving quickly. The aircraft are there already. That's the nice thing about it.

I don't think we should be complacent because the short-term news is reasonably good.

Mr. **Dorgan**. So you're saying the survival of those 3 million people depends directly on the success of the international relief operation?

Mr. **Natsios**. That's exactly correct.

Mr. **Dorgan**. And that success is not a matter of will among those of us who understand what needs to be done, but it relates to a whole range of things, including the rainy season; especially the conflict, the fighting in Ethiopia—some of which we control, some of which we don't control.

And that relates to the question I asked earlier about where is this on the agenda in discussions between President Bush and Mr. Gorbachev, and I appreciate your answer, Mr. Cohen.

Can you tell me what in the administration's view is the need for health supplies, vaccines, and others, for civilians near Asmara and throughout the country?

Are we running into some risks there beyond the immediate food issue?

Mr. **Natsios**. We hope to have a proposal from a private voluntary group—a PVO—to do a very substantial immunization program, particularly for children, but for adults, too, who are at risk.

There is a danger when people become malnourished, when they move, when they go into camps, that epidemics begin which can kill large numbers of people very quickly. There are reports that health conditions have deteriorated in certain parts of greater Asmara. That proposal, I hope, we will receive in the next week. And we have set aside a substantial amount of money to fund that program, which we've been working on for the last month. A large amount of medicines have been sent into Asmara, to the city itself, through several European airlifts which have taken place over the last 6 weeks, particularly one that I believe UNICEF organized. So some medical supplies are getting into the city itself.

I am, frankly, more concerned at this point, with the rural areas which frequently get neglected in all of these famines.

Mr. **Dorgan**. I might observe that next we have a panel of three witnesses, two of whom have just returned from Ethiopia, and maybe we'll get some more direct observations about that as well.

Mr. Hall wanted to inquire additionally.

Mr. **Hall**. One last question. I'm very pleased to learn about the airlift between the Soviets and the United States.

What more can we do in this area? What more can we do to pursue really this peace dividend for Ethiopia as our relations begin to get better?

How can we elevate this item a little bit higher than what it is? What more can we do beyond the airlift?

Mr. **Natsios**. From a logistical or relief point of view, if we get the Soviets' help, it would be very much appreciated. But beyond that, I don't have any immediate suggestions.

Mr. **Cohen**. Congressman, I would like more Soviet cooperation on opening the port. I believe the Soviets tend to lean in favor of the government's view that nothing should be done that tends to give the EPLF de facto sovereignty over the port of Massawa;

therefore, they tend to back the Ethiopian Government in their demands.

For example, at the declaration that was signed in New York last week, sponsored by the Canadians, the Soviets did not join in on the final declaration because they did not want to do anything that might imply a derogation of Ethiopian Government sovereignty.

I think if the Soviets would get over that psychological hangup and join us more in putting pressure on the Ethiopians, I think that would be useful.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Natsios, thank you very much for your testimony this morning. We appreciate you being here.

Next the Chair will call on Michael Clough from the Council on Foreign Relations; David Holdridge, director of Africa region, Catholic Relief Services, and Gayle Smith, Development GAP.

My understanding is that actually all three of these witnesses have recently been to Ethiopia and we will be anxious to take their testimony and hear their observations.

We would ask the audience to take seats if they can; and we would like to ask the witnesses to summarize their testimony. Their entire testimony will be made a part of the permanent record.

The Chair will recognize Mr. Clough from the Council on Foreign Relations. Mr. Clough.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CLOUGH, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CLOUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I will try to be very brief.

I think it's important to make clear that I did not go to Ethiopia last month primarily to look at relief operations. I went there in the context of an overall review of U.S. policy toward the Horn.

I think particularly after hearing this morning's conversation, what I have to say is very relevant to relief, because listening to the discussion of opening the port of Massawa and the Soviet airlift, I have a real sense of unreality because I think that what's happened in the debate over Ethiopia—and I can say this as someone fresh to the issue, more or less—is that we have become consumed by logistical and day-to-day issues; and in the process have lost track of the overall question.

I am going to confine myself to the relief question and not getting into a larger discussion about conflict. But I think the most important point that needs to be made here is the fundamental problem in Ethiopia as in Sudan, is simple—the Western community, the international community, now attaches a far higher value to providing relief to the populations in those countries than the governments do. That is a secondary concern to the governments and to the movements fighting against those governments.

In that situation, we can be held hostage, or our relief policies can be held hostage. Assistant Secretary Cohen said earlier that the objective was to try to reach a situation in which relief was nonpolitical. I think that is an impossibility. Relief is very political.

Relief operations directly relate to questions like, how soon Asmara will fall?

Similarly, the situation in Massawa does not just involve a quibbling over whether or not the Ethiopian Government will accept sovereignty.

In my own view, there is only one way that we will get to the point at which we can begin to address the long-term problems in Ethiopia, and that is to begin to reorient policy so that the burden for relief in Ethiopia is shifted to Ethiopians.

Until you get to the point in which the Ethiopian Government and the opposition groups recognize that there is a very real possibility that the only significant leverage the West has—its provision of relief supplies—will be used if they do not begin to enter into negotiations to end the conflict, I think that we can go on providing relief forever.

The question of an airlift to Asmara, of opening the port of Massawa, is this year's answer to this year's problem, which does nothing to give us a better sense of how we address the problems of next year.

I will end there, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Clough, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Clough appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 59.]

Mr. DORGAN. We will next hear from David Holdridge, director of Africa region, Catholic Relief Services. Mr. Holdridge.

STATEMENT OF DAVID HOLDRIDGE, SENIOR DIRECTOR, AFRICA REGION, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES-USCC

Mr. HOLDRIDGE. Mr. Dorgan, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak as a representative of Catholic Relief Services on the current situation in Ethiopia.

What I propose to do is to talk briefly about the southern corridor a little more specifically than you've heard so far this morning; and then go on to the response of the JRP, of which CRS is a member, to the situation farther north in Eritrea.

First on the southern corridor. On March 20, 11 trucks marked with JRP insignia, flags, and carrying 110 metric tons of relief supplies, rolled out of the government-controlled town of Dese in southern Wello, across the front lines, and into the territory held by the rebels.

An advance team of Ethiopian church leaders accompanied the first convoy to Kobo, in northern Wello, where the first commodities were off-loaded, and then proceeded to Adigrat. Without going further, I have included details in my written testimony here. But suffice it to say that from that beginning until today, we have moved 10,000 tons across the front lines from Dese. With significant participation from the United Nations now, we have 90 trucks going, about one-third from the United Nations—Bailey bridges, bulldozers in place; and with food going as far north as Mekele; and next week to Adigrat, even farther north.

It has been a successful operation and I think a historical operation in the sense that we have been able to take food from the government-controlled areas, the port of Assab, and move it up into the areas controlled by the TPLF.

As I've said before, though, as heartening as this is, that operation continues to hang by a thread. As Michael Clough and Congressman Ackerman know—the security situation threatens that corridor daily. Access from the capital of Addis to Dese is often broken and the road from Assab to Dese is very vulnerable to being broken, which would stop the operation immediately.

However, as it stands now, that operation, combined with the foodstuffs brought across the border from Sudan by REST, appears for the moment to be preventing a worse case scenario. A representative from our partner in the JRP, from the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat—Mr. Natsios referred to him—Abba Kidane, was there more recently. In support of the operations in REST, our Catholic partner—I should say CAFOD from the United Kingdom—Stephen King came out and more or less agreed with the findings of Abba Kidane that for the moment, there is not massive displacement of people in Tigray—again hanging by a thread, but somewhat heartening.

Now the situation in Eritrea, I share—I think with all of the people, with all of my colleagues who are involved in this effort—their concern for Eritrea.

We conclude with the others of the importance of opening the port of Massawa. From Massawa it is one-tenth—to answer a question asked earlier—it is one-tenth the distance from the port of Assab up through Dese all the way up to the southern border of Eritrea. So logistically it is the best route.

The distribution mechanism of either ERA, the relief arm of the EPLF, or of the Catholic church in Asmara are renowned for their efficiency. You have a good distribution network on both sides.

We have started airlifts into Asmara. UNICEF began May 3—1,000 tons over the next 30 days. As you have heard earlier today, our counterpart in the JRP—the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat, along with Catholic Relief Services, started an airlift May 6. Both of these airlifts are targeted to the most vulnerable, and they include such things as weaning foods, high in nutrition, which would be targeted by the Ethiopian Catholic church in Asmara to those vulnerable groups.

So there is an airlift commencing—very modest, and targeted to vulnerable groups.

Now to conclude here—information that just came in very recently from my staff in Ethiopia and Asmara—a couple of things I wanted to say. One is that the fighting around Asmara has intensified. My country director came out 4 days ago and reports that now the fighting is 45 kilometers south of Asmara. Our principal counterparts in Asmara predict that the road to Keren in the north may also be cut soon.

So you're talking about an Asmara situation—for those of you who follow the situation in the Horn—that is becoming increasingly like the situation in Juba; the circle tightening very much on 3 to 400,000 people. The airport is on that southern road, I should say, and that would obviously have an effect on the ability to airlift food in.

The other thing that I just wanted to mention—from a report by the United Nations special emergency programs—and I think it's important to keep this in mind during these discussions—it is we are on the edge or the verge of the planting season. Harvest will follow in 5 months. Although there are seed distributions being done by ERA and REST, if the civil conflict continues to the extent it is now, there will not be sufficient amounts of seeds planted or harvested.

This report from the United Nations forecasts, no matter almost at this point a situation in 1991 as bad as 1990 absent peace. They also say in this particular report that now even with a continuance of the status quo, but without Massawa open, the United Nations assumes that at least 500,000 people may need to be assisted in shelters during 1990.

So just as—as the director for our affairs in sub-Sahara Africa—Ethiopia has been with our agency since 1984 and 1985 consuming most of our energy, I see no real hope, unfortunately, that it will not consume our energies in 1991.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DORGAN. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holdridge appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 65.]

Mr. DORGAN. Gayle Smith from Development GAP.

STATEMENT OF GAYLE SMITH, THE DEVELOPMENT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE POLICIES, INC., THE DEVELOPMENT GAP

Ms. SMITH. Yes, thank you very much for having me today.

I will keep my comments brief as well. I would like to reiterate what Michael has pointed out, and say that I hope that the committee and the administration will put the time and energy into looking for appropriate mechanisms for conflict resolution as they have put into the relief efforts.

I would like to start out by clarifying a couple of points that have been made earlier. First of all, I would disagree with the definition of "at risk" that was put forward earlier. Most of the people presently counted as "in need," say between 3 and 4½ million, lost their last harvest. What we are trying to do at this juncture is to prevent them from resorting to last-ditch coping mechanisms, which means eating their seeds, selling their tools, and selling their livestock; or at worst, migrating from productive lands.

There is a portion of the population that will starve to death if food is not forthcoming immediately. But what we are doing by providing food only in limited quantities is paving the way for renewed famine next year and the year after.

I think comparisons to 1984 and 1985 are relevant. But these people will not starve in 2 or 3 months. What we are doing is increasing their economic vulnerability and ensuring that we will see 1984–85 in a year or two's time.

Second, on the port of Massawa. I agree that the opening of the port of Massawa would make a fundamental difference. I think it's important to clarify, however, that the effect of its closure has not been all that dramatic. None of the civilian population in need in Tigray was served by the port of Massawa prior to its capture by the EPLF. Tigray has been under TPLF administration for close to 2 years and has been served entirely from Sudan until the JRP initiative was launched.

Similarly, the civilians living in EPLF administered areas were served from Sudan. Conversely, if the port of Massawa was opened, if you were to hold the EPLF accountable to what they have stated in letters to the Secretary General of the U.N., Massawa could be used to serve populations in all parts of Eritrea as well as Ethiopia.

On the point of the JRP, I think that's a very important initiative, and one that has set an important precedent in the region. I would concur with other speakers that it is fragile and tenuous; it relies on agreement of both parties and it is also subject to military attack should the war escalate in the region.

I think, however, the JRP has served to obscure the cross-border operations, which, in my view, are the key to the relief effort at this point. These operations have been running for 10 years. I understand that State wishes to keep a low profile on the cross-border effort although Sudan has allowed cross-border operations to run because it wants to prevent the flow of refugees into Sudan.

The cross-border programs have proven to be very effective and every efficient; effective in the sense that they are allowing the building of local capacity for disaster management and the involvement of communities in the relief effort; efficient because at this point they are bringing more aid into the region than any other mechanism.

I think it's critically important that the cross-border operations come out of the closet and be discussed on an equal footing with the JRP and the possibility of airlifts.

A problem in the cross-border at this point is that although food has been forthcoming in increasing amounts, trucks have not been. It is primarily governments that have the funds to buy trucks. They are quite expensive. Trucks, I believe, are perceived as more political than food aid. I don't think time affords us the luxury of that debate.

I think at this point it is folly to keep providing food without the necessary transport support to put it inside Tigray and Eritrea.

At the same time, rehabilitation assistance has been very limited. As I pointed out earlier, one of the problems we're facing now is that we're laying the groundwork for continued and renewed famine. Seeds, tools, and oxen are needed. Again, I'm afraid that governments view this as a more political type of assistance than is food aid.

I would argue that it is cynical to be providing people with food aid to survive another season without assisting them to produce for themselves.

I would like to make a number of recommendations based on my own experience in the region.

First of all, I think that the donor principles put forward recently, which the United States signed, should be pursued. I think it should be noted that both the EPLF and the TPLF have recently stated in writing their desire to see the U.N. play a coordinating role, and their willingness to observe some sort of safe passage agreement.

I think these organizations should be held accountable to their statements.

So long as the Ethiopian Government remains the primary obstacle to achieving agreement on the proposed principles, increased pressure must be brought to bear on the Mengistu regime. I think that the recent resolution that is now moving through Congress is a positive step forward in this case.

I think at the same time, we have to look at the Eritrean question with a greater dose of reality. With all due respect to the position of the State Department on the unity of Ethiopia, I think coming forward with that position effectively seals international debate on the Eritrean question at a time when it desperately needs to take place.

I think a more informed policy might be one that opened up all possibilities for solutions in Eritrea and therefore invited both sides into a debate on an equal footing.

I would like to see the United States expand and sustain assistance to all relief mechanisms in the region, including cross-border, and to support the provision of trucks and rehabilitation assistance to the region.

I think it's also worth exploring whether the 330,000 metric tons of grain that were on route to the port of Massawa when it was taken have been or can be reconsigned to the port of Sudan.

I would like to see, where possible, the expansion of the JRP or the southern corridor initiative, but I think it's important that be viewed as a complement rather than an alternative to the cross-border effort.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith appears at the conclusion of the hearing, see p. 74.]

Mr. Dorgan. Thank you very much for the testimony, from all three of you. It's good to get the firsthand observations and we appreciate it very much.

Mr. Clough, you indicated that you traveled to the region for different purposes, and broader purposes, than just to evaluate what was happening in the area of hunger.

Could you give me your perception of what has been the role of the United Nations as you saw it in your trip to the region?

Mr. Clough. In the region or in Ethiopia?

Mr. Dorgan. In Ethiopia, I'm sorry.

Mr. Clough. We didn't spend a lot of time looking at the U.N. operations themselves. I think that the U.N. generally is involved in a wide range of refugee operations, including in Eritrea, a number of operations directly along the Somalia border. I think that there are always going to be problems in working for the U.N. because of the question that really is at the heart of how you conduct relief operations, which is ultimately the question of sovereignty.

I think that before you can ever have a totally effective international effort in Ethiopia, you are going to have to address some very fundamental questions about the principles which have guided international relations since the end of World War II. Basically what we are getting into, and what the United Nations and other organizations are getting into, is operating in a way that is totally inconsistent with principles of sovereignty which were laid down at the end of World War II.

And what we're doing is choosing not to talk about those fundamental issues, but instead, talking about the logistical problems, when in fact all of the parties ability to operate in the situation is complicated by lingering commitments to those principles.

I think that in terms of the U.N., the U.N. is always going to be particularly limited because it is, after all, an organization of governments, which was created by sovereign units and is not simply going to abandon that principle very easily.

Mr. DORGAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Holdridge, what will happen to the southern corridor or the southern route when the rainy season begins? Will it still be viable? Are we able to make stockpiles now in preparation for that? What's your assessment?

Mr. HOLDRIDGE. It will be viable to the extent that the work of the United Nations' logistics people continues; they are bringing in the Bailey bridges, the bulldozers, as I said, and making it a pretty effective supply line.

It will not be able to maintain the same levels of food assistance that it is now, before the rainy season. That part is sure. But traffic will continue if it isn't disrupted by military conflict.

Mr. DORGAN. Just traffic at a diminished level; is that correct?

Mr. HOLDRIDGE. That's correct.

Mr. DORGAN. Gayle Smith, you talked about rehabilitation. How would you propose that famine relief efforts be linked to future rehabilitation in Eritrea? I don't quite understand the connection, and how you propose we deal with it.

Ms. SMITH. I think that at the same time that we are providing food aid, we need to be providing seeds and tools and cash for livestock replacement, if in fact that's necessary.

I think what tends to happen is that we one after the other, and it's too late to wait till next year to provide the rehabilitation that's necessary.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Hall.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Holdridge, are you reaching your goal of 15,000 tons a month up through the southern corridor?

Mr. HOLDRIDGE. No, not right now. But from the initial modest start, and in large part thanks to the help of the United Nations, Save the Children, Oxfam, and some other NGO's that are working with us, we are now delivering at about the rate of 8 to 10,000 a month.

So, no, we are not at our target of 14,500.

Mr. HALL. How many people do you think you can reach if you reach 15,000 tons a month?

Mr. HOLDRIDGE. If we reach 15,000 tons—and this is a difficult—and not to be evasive—but this is difficult to answer because so much depends upon how it's distributed, whether they are individual rations, the size of the rations, family rations, et cetera. But 15,000 tons should be sufficient on a monthly basis to provide food assistance for between 800,000–900,000 people, in that neighborhood.

Mr. **Hall**. How many do you estimate—this would be for all of you—how many people do you estimate are out of the reach of any kind of food? Do you have any kind of feel for that?

Mr. **Holdridge**. Out of reach?

Mr. **Hall**. In other words, the food that's coming cross-border, the food that's coming up from the south, whatever food was in Massawa before they started to have military action.

Mr. **Holdridge**. I think that out of reach—and Gayle can correct me on this from the cross-border side if I'm wrong—that Tigray is not out of reach, to the extent that the convoys are allowed to distribute without harassment from the Government of Ethiopia. They are harassed, and the supply line is very long from Sudan. So to the extent that I understand, in that area controlled by the TPLF in eastern Tigray, where we have worked up until 2 years ago, in the areas of, for example, Adigrat, et cetera, there are shortages there.

Now in Eritrea, which, as I said, we believe is much more critical at this point, I would agree with what Mr. Natsios said, that area along the Keren line down to Asmara south—I know that you and your staffs have been to Ethiopia—down to Senafe in the south—that area that is contested now, and where the battle rages, I would say, is the most vulnerable, without a doubt—to include, with each passing week, the people in Asmara, the estimated 400,000 people.

In those areas outside that contested area, or those areas that were up until recently controlled, or the roads controlled by day, by the Government of Ethiopia, I think ERA has a pretty good record of reaching many of the other areas in Eritrea.

So I would say in short, eastern Eritrea, eastern Tigray, because they seem to be the areas most affected by the conflict.

Mr. **Dorgan**. Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. **Ackerman**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Clough, did I infer from your statement that you believe it is appropriate for us to, at this juncture or somewhere near this juncture, to say a pox on both your houses and threaten the cessation of aid lest they come to terms with the problem?

Mr. **Clough**. I wouldn't go quite that far. But I think that unless that is held out as a serious possibility, I think it's very difficult to see any way out of the current mess.

I know from discussions that I had down there that there have been several points in time in which people running relief operations on the ground have come very close to saying, the conditions under which we're operating prohibit us from functioning effectively.

I think the broader issue is changing the focus of the way we deal with the Ethiopian Government. From what I gather from my trip there and other discussions, we've a situation now where the discussion about conflict resolution and the discussion of relief are being separated; there is an attempt, as Assistant Secretary Cohen mentioned, to create a strategy that de-politicizes relief.

I think it's impossible to de-politicize relief. And if you will allow me for a minute to give an example of Sudan. In Sudan, we visited the city of Torit in southern Sudan, which is now in SPLA-controlled territory.

Torit was captured by the SPLA when food supplies ran out in Torit. Because of the logistical situation, it was impossible to provide an airlift to Torit and consequently, in that case, there was never an international uproar over how to provide airlifts to save Torit—and you have a change of power.

I think the situation in Asmara and Juba is roughly the same. You have a situation in which any way you cut it, whatever happens with relief is going to change the military balance. So I think that we need to begin to think about a strategy that factors that in explicitly.

I also think that, in giving credit to the relief operations on the ground, the more that you have situations such as in the case of CRS, where you are strengthening local church institutions, where you are strengthening institutions within Ethiopia itself, transferring more and more responsibility to them for the relief operations, that you can eventually create a situation in which the lobby for relief is inside the country, not outside of the country. Because I think as long as the lobby is outside of the country, it's going to be a very difficult situation to get out of.

Mr. **Ackerman**. I flew into Torit from Kenya in a little 6-passenger plane from Norwegian People's Aid, I believe it was, to meet with Colonel Gurang 2 days after Torit had fallen to his forces. But it seemed to me that it was not the international community that either threatened or withheld food from Torit, but the actual logistics of the war that was going on.

My concern here is that if indeed we dangle the prospects—use them or not—of denying emergency relief aid to all sides, then we basically lose the argument of the moral high ground that food should not be used as a weapon if we indeed threaten to bring the parties together with the veiled threat—real or not—that we would possibly engage in the same thing.

That's as much an act of terrorism on our part, denying innocent people food unless they politically come to the kind of perspective—humanitarian though it may be—that we would like to see them reach.

Mr. **Clough**. I understand the question about the moral high ground, but I think the reality is—and the reason I pointed to Torit—is that in situations like Torit, it's not that we denied food; but it's that Torit never became the focus of international attention, so that there was never an attempt to provide an airlift.

Had it become a focus of international attention, I'm sure that there would have been an effort to provide air relief. And right now today, a year after it fell, Torit would probably still be under siege. So I think that the reality is food is a weapon.

Mr. **Ackerman**. There's no question about food being a weapon. As a matter of fact, we passed a resolution that was sponsored by almost every member of this committee—passed both Houses of this Congress unanimously, that food not be used as a weapon.

My concern is, that despite the fact that it's a reality, murder is a reality too, but we should not engage in it just to eliminate murderers—you lose the strength of your argument.

Mr. **Clough**. I understand your argument, but I think it goes further than that. The point is that we all recognize that ultimately the only solution to Ethiopia and Sudan's problems is a political solution that ends the war.

The reality is that the only significant leverage that the international community has over these parties, particularly as the superpowers are withdrawing from the region—which I think they clearly are—is the food relief we give; but instead of that being leverage that we can use to pressure the parties, it has become something that the parties use to manipulate us.

Mr. ACKERMAN. We don't have any disagreement on that.

I have a question of Ms. Smith, if I may.

You seem to indicate, I think, a shift in exclusive emphasis on emergency food aid, and seem to be heading in the direction of perhaps we should be changing our policy toward Ethiopia in order to avoid a recurrence of what we know is going to happen 1 or 2 years down the road by providing some kind of developmental aid.

Is that the direction you're looking to shape us in?

Ms. SMITH. It's a bit tricky because the areas I'm specifically talking about are no longer under Ethiopian Government administration so I don't know how that applies to the policy.

I'm not sure in this case that rehabilitation assistance qualifies as development either. Development aid implies some sort of structural support. And I think in this case, seeds, tools, and oxen are in fact survival assistance. We're talking about the basic amount of assistance it requires for a family to feed itself; not to fundamentally change its economic position or redistribute wealth or anything to support.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think you've come to a political conclusion that if indeed the areas de facto are not under Ethiopian administration that you're conceding an independent status for the areas in Eritrea and Tigray that are not. When indeed the fact is that our Government has not conceded that by virtue of who is administering the area right now. I believe the same policy applies to—and I don't speak for the administration for sure—but I think that the policy does apply to all of what they consider Eritrea, which on the map, at least, that we recognize is part of Ethiopia.

Ms. SMITH. I think I would have to question that on both moral and developmental grounds. I think that what we're saying in that case——

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think my question is—let me just rephrase it simply.

Ms. SMITH. OK.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are you saying that we should supply developmental aid to Eritrea and only relief aid to Ethiopia and/or the rest of Ethiopia? I don't want to politicize my perspective on this in this discussion.

Ms. SMITH. No, I'm saying that farmers who have lost a harvest and who have had to eat their seeds or sell their tools and livestock should have assistance in seeing those replenished so that they can produce for the next season. Otherwise, we can bank on the fact that we will have to feed them next year. That's all I'm talking about.

I think that should be applied without discrimination as to who controls which area.

Mr. Ackerman. So you're saying that we should be providing the tools as well as food supplies regardless of whether if it's in the southern part or the northern part of Ethiopia, or the central part, regardless if it's Eritrea, or Tigray, or anyplace else?

Ms. Smith. Right.

Mr. Ackerman. One further question for Mr. Holdridge, if I may, Mr. Chairman.

You made reference to the situation in Asmara as being almost analogous to the situation in Juba in the Sudan. I presume what you mean by that is that it is a government-held town, the access to which is almost completely controlled and encircled by the forces opposed to the government.

Is that accurate?

Mr. Holdridge. These reports that came in from my employee in Addis 2 days ago are correct, and the road to Keren in the north has been cut, and the road to Senafie, Adi Keyih, in the south has been cut just 45 kilometers south. Yes, in fact, Asmara is encircled. Yes, to answer your question.

Mr. Ackerman. Would you apply the same analogy to Gonder City in Gonder?

Mr. Holdridge. To Gonder City in Gonder?

Mr. Ackerman. Yes.

Mr. Holdridge. The reason why Juba came to my mind is because—we are active in the relief activities there on both the SPLA side and in the garrison town of Juba controlled by the Government of Sudan—is because it looks as if, without Massawa, from the beginnings of this airlift that has started May 3 and May 6, that it's going to grow, it appears. This is what I'm hearing from the EEC and other donors that this is going to grow. And it's very reminiscent of the type of airlifts that we did with the World Food Program into Juba, which had a similar population of 400,000. So that's why I brought it up.

Mr. Ackerman. But my question basically is, as the SPLA has Juba surrounded, and you state, as the EPLF has Asmara surrounded, my question is, does indeed the TPLF have Gonder surrounded?

Mr. Holdridge. Yes, but we're not talking about the same numbers of people that we are in Asmara. We're talking about close to a half a million people in Asmara now, with no other access except in airlift coming into Asmara.

Mr. Ackerman. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dorgan. Mr. Hall.

Mr. Hall. Mr. Clough, you said that opening Massawa or an airlift are this year's answer to this year's problems. You talked briefly about longer term solutions. What do you mean by that statement, and what are your long-term solutions to the problem?

Mr. Clough. If we can point to the issue of Juba—there's an example of the airlift to Juba is now going on, how long?

Mr. Holdridge. Over 1½ years since CRS and World Food Program started.

Mr. Hall. All right.

Mr. Clough. With very little indication that anything is going to change in the short term.

The airlift in Asmara, once it gets going, will gain the same momentum and I think will be very difficult to reverse. From my own perspective, what we need is an overall review of the underlying principles of policy, and I think that would require doing something different than we're doing right now. Right now I see a policy that is totally circumscribed by not wanting to step on certain toes, not wanting to cross certain lines. We don't want to talk about cross-border operations because that might be complicated. We're concerned about moral high ground at a time in which the reality is that the people on the ground aren't, and they are the ones that are actually driving the situation.

So what I think we need to do is ask some very fundamental questions about at what point we use what leverage to get the Government of Ethiopia and the other parties—now let me make it clear, I'm on neither side of this issue politically. I think that in some of the things that Gayle is talking about in providing development assistance, we are also walking down a very slippery slope where we are in effect providing logistical and infrastructural support, development assistance ultimately, for what are incipient independent governments. The same situation exists in Sudan.

At this point, I don't have answers. But what I would say is that before we can get to the point that we can start coming up with answers, we have to start asking the right questions. That doesn't mean that tomorrow we say we close down all of the relief operations. I think that those relief operations at present obviously have to continue.

But it does mean that we begin asking those questions as opposed to continuing to ask how we improve simply the logistical side; how we respond to this particular emergency or that particular emergency. Otherwise, what will happen is sooner or later the international community will tire of the situation. And instead of using the leverage we have in a deliberate manner, it will simply be squandered away and will end up turning to another crisis.

I've spent a lot of time working on southern Africa. I've seen it happen there with Mozambique going up and down in terms of public attention—one minute it's a hot issue; the next minute it's not.

So I don't come here to say that there's an easy answer but I think we do need to go back to basics a bit.

Mr. HALL. Are you working on these solutions?

Mr. CLOUGH. We are hoping to produce some sort of a report over the summer, focused on the Horn as a whole.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HALL. Yes, I will.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I didn't want to leave by not commenting and giving the opinion that I completely concurred with your observation that the only leverage that we had was basically the food assistance that we're providing. Indeed, I am firmly entrenched in the belief that we have a lot of other leverage to wield in this particular situation.

The Government of Ethiopia has needs as a government and as an institution that go beyond those that most concern us, which, of course, are the survival of people who might be starving. They find themselves increasingly under the movement of international isolation, which even those who have been their staunchest allies and supporters, seem to be backing away from some of the things that they are looking for—our Government can certainly be very helpful with at very little cost to us.

The problem remains as to what the Government of Ethiopia is willing to do on the humanitarian level in order for us to accommodate them with the things that they are looking for.

I think that now we are waiting for some very clear signals from the Government of Ethiopia. And I believe that the weight that we have to wield here is much greater than the tonnage with them, regrettably maybe; but certainly at this point may be much more important to them, and certainly isn't anything that we can not live with.

Mr. CLOUGH. I think that's true. But what I would say is that we are in a situation where there's no question we can bargain with the Ethiopian Government on the provision of certain things in order to get them to do what we want them to do on relief.

The reality is, though, that the Ethiopian Government at this point in time, and all of the other parties in the Horn of Africa, are interested in one thing: either maintaining their position in power, or achieving power.

What that means is that any bargain we strike with them is going to be on the basis of giving them something that they perceive as making it easier for them to attain their ultimate objective.

To think that we can bargain with the Ethiopian Government in a way that does not involve actually reinforcing the Ethiopian Government's position, I think is very difficult. The issue of a cease-fire was raised earlier. We had a discussion with a very close adviser to Mengistu; the question of a cease-fire came up. His answer was simple, he says, you can't agree to a cease-fire when you are losing a war.

Mr. ACKERMAN. It's pretty obvious that's an official party line.

I made it clear in my discussions with President Mengistu that it was my scientific belief that the world was around and that when you're on top and the world turns, you're on the bottom an equal number of times. And that while one might be predisposed to cutting a deal and making a bargain while you're on top, you had better do it real quick because every day the situation seems to change.

People are reluctant in wartime situations, when you're talking about coming to the bargaining table, to make an agreement when you appear to be in a weakened position. Hence, the taking of the port becomes much more than symbolic. It shows that there is a residual strength; that there is an extra 9 lives possibly left; and we had better sit down and talk because I can flex my muscles.

That condition deteriorates, evidently, as the days go by; and it deteriorates for both sides as well.

Nonetheless, I had proposed to him insomuch as he seemed interested very much so in improving the climate between the West and his government that he would do what so many other nations in the world seem to be doing right now before it might be beyond the point of his ability to do so. I proposed that he have a multiparty system within Ethiopia, to abandon the one Communist, Social

Workers, whatever party—the name of which he has already changed.

He agreed to do that—no preconditions—to allow for a multiparty broad base system that would take a little bit of time to put in effect; but nonetheless, that he would propose to the party; they would discuss it, and then it would go to the dirge, and hopefully within 1 year we might look to see that.

Clearly he is interested in improving his relations with the West because there's no place else for him to turn. That kind of movement seems to me rather positive, and those are the cards we should continue to play, and the cards that I know that the State Department right now is playing.

Mr. CLOUGH. This is an uninformed guess, but I have serious doubts that the current government in Ethiopia will ultimately preside over whatever new system emerges in Ethiopia.

Mr. HALL. That's the last time I give you my time. [Laughter.]

Mr. DORGAN. The Chair wishes to thank the members and the witnesses today at the hearing.

The discussion has been, I think, very important and useful for us. It is obvious that we must move quickly to implement all the possible options to bring relief to the region—to Tigray and Eritrea. If not, hundreds of thousands face calamity. We need to look at the emerging health aid needs, rehabilitation aid and at a political solution to the war.

I want to say thanks to all of you who contributed to this hearing. We will watch this situation very closely; work closely with the administration, the United Nations, and others, to see that we move as expeditiously as possible to address these critical human needs.

The Chair wishes also to especially commend the United Nations and the private volunteer organization relief workers who are doing extraordinary work in the field. It's work that is almost never on the front page of any newspaper, but it's the Lord's work in helping the people around this world who need help. Undoubtedly, they have saved hundreds of thousands of people.

I want to thank especially the Secretary General of the United Nations, Secretary General de Cuellar, and UNICEF Director Grant for continued commitment to deliver emergency aid and to resolve this conflict.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the task force was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TONY P. HALL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

The Select Committee on Hunger has dealt with the issue of Ethiopian famine since it was created; both to our sorrow and to our credit.

Since we last met to discuss this problem, a lot has changed. For a variety of reasons, the dire predictions we heard last winter have not become realities. The Southern and Cross-Border relief corridors are operating now. While the level of food moving is not enough, it is encouraging. Also, the credit for this fact belongs almost exclusively to the people in this room. While much has changed, one tragic point remains constant; all parties in Ethiopia's internal conflict continue to place military victory above humanitarian concerns.

The Ethiopian government reluctantly agreed to the southern corridor and they still oppose the Cross-Border route. And their Relief Commissioner told me last week that they refuse to allow the port of Massawa to be used for relief, even for a brief period. They continue to bomb the city.

I don't want anybody to be deceived at the current situation:

- The amount of food moving in Ethiopia now is not enough to prevent a summer of famine death.
- More food must move across the border from Sudan, and the Southern corridor must move many times the amount of food it's now carrying.
- The port of Massawa must be opened. For the government to close the most direct route to the famine regions is inhuman; bombing civilians in a city with no military targets is barbaric.

In a nutshell, while the level of famine death is not what we had feared, the current relief systems could collapse any minute. Much more needs to be done. I hope our witnesses can tell us what plans they have for delivering food during the rainy season, when roads disappear overnight. I hope in particular that Administration witnesses can tell us what plans we have to bring other nations into the effort to secure Massawa, and to shore-up the existing corridors. I'm anxious to hear from the second panel about their recent work on Ethiopia. I want to commend our witnesses for their efforts, and congratulate the Task Force Chairman for this timely hearing.

IV

101st CONGRESS
2d Session

H. RES. 384

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the urgent famine situation in Ethiopia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 25, 1990

Mr. **Wolpe** (for himself, Mr. **Wolf**, Mr. **Gray**, Mr. **Dorgan** of North Dakota, Mr. **Emerson**, Mr. **Burton** of Indiana, Mr. **Dellums**, Mr. **Houghton**, Mr. **Payne** of New Jersey, Mr. **Solomon**, Mr. **Crockett**, Mr. **Roth**, Mr. **Hall** of Ohio, Mr. **Dymally**, and Mr. **Moody**) submitted the following resolution; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, and Ways and Means

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RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the urgent famine situation in Ethiopia.

Whereas famine and escalating fighting between the Ethiopian Government and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) threaten the lives of up to 5,000,000 persons in northern Ethiopia;

Whereas the two functioning channels of international relief, cross-border operations and the recently opened "southern corridor," remain exceedingly vulnerable to military disruptions, operate far below maximum capacity, and realistically are capable of reaching no more than 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 persons;

Whereas the northern corridor through the Eritrean port of Massawa, seized by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in February, is indispensable to the delivery of relief to 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 persons in rebel and government-held areas of Eritrea and Tigray;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia refuses to allow international relief access through Massawa, continues to bomb Massawa and cross-border relief convoys, and has not accepted a United Nations leadership role in coordinating the free passage distribution of relief to northern Ethiopia;

Whereas any major new military offensives by either the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) or the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) will only further gravely damage the prospects of international relief reaching Eritrea and Tigray;

Whereas unless coordinated international action is taken immediately at the highest levels to overcome the political and military obstacles to the delivery of relief, there will shortly be mass starvation in northern Ethiopia; and

Whereas in addition to alleviating the immediate humanitarian emergency in northern Ethiopia, United States' interests lie also in exercising leadership to forestall further disintegration in Ethiopia by actively promoting fundamental reforms and a negotiated resolution of Ethiopia's internal wars: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the Administration should be commended for its quick action in addressing the humanitarian crisis in northern Ethiopia;

(2) the President should strongly urge all parties to the conflict in northern Ethiopia to embrace the principles outlined in the joint communique issued April 24, 1990, by Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the member states of the European Community, and the United States, by—

(A) agreeing to a cease-fire which forces all parties to refrain from any further military offensives and which ends Ethiopian military attacks upon Massawa and cross-border relief convoys;

(B) accepting free passage arrangements which encourage the maximum flow of relief through all available channels, including the port of Massawa; and

(C) permitting the United Nations to assume a prominent role in coordinating international relief efforts;

(3) the President should urge all nations supplying military assistance to the warring parties in Ethiopia, in particular the Soviet Union, Israel, and Arab States supporting opposition groups, to use their influence to facilitate a cease-fire and end external military flows;

(4) President George Bush should urge Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to exert maximum pressure on the Ethiopian Government to accept the terms outlined under paragraph (2);

(5) until the Government of Ethiopia takes all of the actions under paragraph (2), the President should—

(A) oppose any favorable treatment of the Government of Ethiopia by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

(B) continue to oppose any upgrading of United States diplomatic relations with the Government of Ethiopia, and

(C) prohibit the importation into the United States of Ethiopian coffee;

(6) after the Government of Ethiopia has taken all of the actions under paragraph (2) and has made substantial progress in effecting macroeconomic reform and in negotiating a settlement of Ethiopia's internal wars which encompasses major political reforms, the President should begin the normalization of relations with Ethiopia and should support an expanded World Bank and IMF role in Ethiopia; and

(7) the Administration should impress upon Ethiopia's opposition groups that the United States' attitude toward each such group will be greatly influenced by their individual cooperation in facilitating relief under the terms outlined in paragraph (2) and by the steps each group takes in negotiating a lasting political settlement of Ethiopia's internal wars.

○

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HERMAN J. COHEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Dorgan, members of the International Task Force:

I am pleased to be with you again this morning to talk about ongoing efforts to meet the drought emergency in Ethiopia.

When I last appeared before this Task Force, in joint hearings held two months ago with the African Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we were looking at a frightening prospect.

-- Famine threatened the lives of as many as five million people in northern Ethiopia.

-- The Mengistu government was bombing relief convoys wherever it found them attempting to reach insurgent-held areas.

-- Efforts to arrange safe passage for deliveries of relief food had been slowed down by Ethiopian government obstruction, and then overturned by the Eritrean insurgents' attack on the port of Massawa.

These problems have absorbed an extraordinary amount of time and attention in both the Congress and the Administration in recent months. Officials of our two branches of government have worked together to find a way out of these problems.

Today I can report to you that our joint efforts, and those of other donor nations and organizations, have borne some fruit.

-- Arrangements for safe passage of relief food have established a route from the port of Asseb, through Dese into the southern portion of the drought areas. This "Southern Line" so far has delivered without major mishap more than 8000 metric tons of food, and is building toward its target figure of 15,000 tons a month. Its reach is extending northward, into the worst-hit areas of Tigray.

-- Relief supplies can be delivered from Sudan into the drought areas of Tigray and Eritrea at rates higher than anticipated.

-- Efforts are under way to purchase food from surplus areas within Tigray for distribution to those areas hardest hit by the drought.

-- Contingency plans have been developed for a supply of food by airlift, should that be needed, and the US will support a modest airlift being organized by the UN.

As you well know, getting this far has been uphill all the way. What we have gained to date could be upset at any time -- by new attacks, by the rainy season, or by breakdown of agreements already reached.

New, urgent steps need to be taken to secure what we have accomplished thus far.

The routes that have been put together are long, tortuous, and expensive. The Southern Line in particular requires that food be trucked 250 miles overland to Desse, then rerouted northward again into the drought areas. In addition, we have the prospect of the rainy season, expected to begin in June. Once the rains start, our ability to use the dirt roads over which much of the food passes will sharply diminish. Therefore, it will be important to stockpile as much food as possible now in the drought areas. And finally, the Ethiopian air force is a constant threat to any convoy it finds not using the Southern Line.

For these reasons, we need the port of Massawa. Food delivered to Massawa could be distributed in Eritrea and Tigray at much less cost, freeing up valuable resources for other relief needs. And we need an international arrangement to protect deliveries of relief food across the border from Sudan.

In recent weeks, Mr. Chairman, the members of this Task Force, other of your Congressional colleagues, and we in the Administration have been working to try to win Ethiopian government consent to allow international authorities to take up their traditional central role in coordinating relief efforts. We have urged Addis to allow the free passage of relief food through Massawa. We have also urged that an international effort be instituted to bring in food around the clock across the border from Sudan.

We are encouraged by the UN Secretary General's April 26 public statement that the Ethiopian government would discuss other relief routes. That should mean Massawa. We believe that all donor nations -- indeed, any nation in the world that feels compassion for the hungry -- should continue to express to Addis Ababa in the strongest terms the concern of all of us that the Ethiopian government quickly take the necessary steps to allow an internationally-supervised relief operation in Massawa.

Such an operation should be possible to craft. Neutral monitors can assure both parties that only civilian cargoes are being carried, and that food is being distributed only to the needy. Emblems, flags, and other signature markings can clearly identify humanitarian convoys. There is a wealth of expertise on which to draw. What is needed is only the political will to do so -- to call upon these resources.

We are in constant liaison with other donors and parties. Recently the Canadians played an extremely helpful role in organizing a donor statement of principles which was released in New York. We talk to the Soviets regularly about the situation in Ethiopia and are hopeful that they will contribute aircraft to the upcoming UN-organized airlift to Asmara. We will continue efforts to achieve our goal of moving food to all who need it.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW NATSIOS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chairman Dorgan and members of the select committee, I am pleased to appear before you again to review the status of relief efforts in northern Ethiopia.

As Assistant Secretary Cohen has just stated, we have made considerable progress in moving food into the famine areas of Tigray and Eritrea. Deliveries along the "southern line" from the Government-controlled port of Assab through Desse and north into rebel-held Tigray have reached 8,000 metric tons a month. We expect this to increase to 15,000 metric tons a month soon.

The Joint Relief Partnership, the JRP, which is operating the food convoys from Desse, is presently stockpiling food in Mekele and other locations until stocks reach a level which will allow general distributions to begin.

The food moving into Tigray has allayed our worst fears. We now have two eyewitness accounts from trained relief officials with no political agendas on conditions on the ground in Tigray. They report that because of the effective work of REST, the Tigrayan relief agency, in transporting food from Sudan and from surplus areas in western and southern Tigray there has been no mass movements of people in search of food and no starvation. The situation is quite precarious, however, because these sources of food are so tenuous almost no food is being stockpiled other than the small amounts managed by JRP. The rainy season has not yet begun, and when it does, in mid-June, the rains will significantly reduce the amount of relief food that can move into Tigray.

We are receiving similar reports regarding conditions in Eritrea. The Eritrean rebel's relief organization is also moving significant amounts of food into Eritrea and the population is not at immediate risk. However, like Tigray, the relief effort in Eritrea will also be slowed by the rains beginning in mid-June.

We continue to be very concerned about the food situation in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, which remains under the control of the Ethiopian government. The city, which is surrounded by rebel forces, is almost completely dependent upon resupply by airlifts from Addis Ababa. The population of the city has grown as a large influx of people has entered the city to escape the fighting. The JRP continues to operate five distribution centers in Asmara and occasionally provides food to some of the other smaller neighboring towns which remain in Government hands. The JRP is targeting a population of 237,000 displaced and destitute people. On-hand food stocks can only keep the JRP operation supplied for perhaps another month.

Because of this situation, we are planning to join with the other donors through the United Nations' World Food Program to support a limited airlift of food and fuel into Asmara. OFDA expects to contribute $1 million dollars toward this effort.

The threat to the people of Asmara demonstrates very clearly how tenuous the situation remains in northern Ethiopia. While existing food stocks and arriving relief supplies are keeping the situation from becoming critical, there is no margin for error. For this reason, the reopening of Massawa port for relief shipments remains our principal diplomatic objective in Ethiopia famine response.

I am very concerned that the success of the southern route has created the impression that we have met the challenge of moving food into the north. We have not. I am afraid this perception may lead to a reduction in the efforts of the U.S. and other donors to continue to press the Government of Ethiopia and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) to reopen Massawa for relief shipments. We recently joined the Government of Canada, the European Community and other donors in issuing a statement of principles regarding relief in Ethiopia.

This statement, which has been endorsed by the Soviet Union, calls upon the Government of Ethiopia and the insurgents to open all appropriate ports for relief. I hope this strong consensus on the need to reopen Massawa can be maintained and enable the world community to bring sufficient pressure on Addis and the EPLF to cooperate.

One final issue I would like to raise concerns donor coordination. We work cooperatively with other food donors on emergencies such the one we face in Ethiopia to coordinate shipments of food relief to ensure orderly deliveries. In previous Ethiopian droughts, in 1984 and 1987, the United States committed itself to providing one-third of the food assistance required. In both cases, when the final tonnages delivered were calculated, the U.S. contribution exceeded forty percent. This year, the U.S. Government has already pledged to date 216,200 metric tons, or over 40 percent of the approximately 528,000 MT pledged by all donors.

I raise this because I am concerned other donors are not assuming as large a share of the relief burden as they have in previous years. Food shipments arriving in Ethiopia are not keeping pace with the commitments other donors have made. We share the frustration many donors feel regarding the problems in Ethiopia, I believe we must continue to do all we can to meet the emergency food requirements in Ethiopia this year and I believe we can be successful if we continue pressing our current strategy.

I appreciate the interest and concern this committee has shown in the efforts we have been making in Ethiopia. I hope we can count on your continued support.

Thank you.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

SITUATION REPORT NO. 6 12:00 noon April 27, 1990

ETHIOPIA - Drought

Note: New information is underlined

Date: Poor rains, civil war and other complications in the summer and fall of 1989 leading to severe food shortages beginning in early 1990

Areas Affected: Northern Ethiopia, principally Eritrea and parts of Tigray, and Wollo, Gondar, and Hararge (see attached map)

Summary of Assistance:

U.S. Government	$128,254,613
International Community	$124,658,700
TOTAL	$252,913,313

Number of Affected Persons

Estimates by international agencies suggest that up to 5 million people may be at risk in Ethiopia, in both government areas and insurgent-held territory. This figure does not include refugees from neighboring countries staying in Ethiopia.

General Situation

Poor rainfall in Eritrea and Tigray during the summer of 1989 led to severely diminished harvests in both provinces. The dismal agricultural situation is exacerbated by war. Through most of the fall and winter, government troops fought sporadically with Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces. In January, after a period of heavy fighting, the government seemed to have regained territory in north and south Gondar, including the city of Debre Tabor. On Feb. 8, 1990, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) attacked and ultimately captured the key northern port of Massawa, and other areas in Eritrea. The Ethiopian government has made several attempts to recover the port, but they have been unsuccessful. The Ethiopian Government continues to hold the towns of Keren, Asmara and Adi Keyih, and the roads between them, in Eritrea. Asmara has been cut off from resupply overland, and the government of Ethiopia has been maintaining the city by airlifts from the south. Asmara has been facing shortages of fuel, electricity, and food, and large numbers of people fleeing the fighting have entered the city. To the south, the government has been pushed back to a line running from north of Gondar to Bahir Dar, to north of Dese and to the Red Sea coast north of Assab. The government still holds the strategic city and air force base at Bahir Dar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, although reports indicate that the airfield is heavily damaged. Recent fighting between the TPLF and government troops in North Shoa has not resulted in significant changes to the battle lines.

Massawa port was damaged by the February fighting, although reports indicated that the port could still receive ships. However, over the last several weeks, the Ethiopian Government has been bombing the port, and it is not clear how much damage it has sustained. No relief supplies are currently coming throught the port. The World Food Program (WFP) reported that there were 45,460 MT of food stocks in the port at the time of the February attack that were probably lost to the relief effort. The EPLF offered to make Massawa an open city for relief purposes. The international donor community has urged the Ethiopian government to agree. The European Community, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States have issued a joint statement of principles calling on all parties to facilitate relief, including opening all ports in Ethiopia.

In March, the RRC and the TPLF agreed to let JRP convoys go into Tigray from the government controlled town of Dese in southern Wollo. The first convoy, consisting of eleven trucks carrying 120 MT of food, arrived in Kobo, in northern Wollo, on March 21. As of April 27, 558 trucks carrying a total of 6000 MT have taken this route. Road crews have graded the road at Wergesa where the bridge had washed out, with the result that trailers bearing loads up to 30 MT can now travel this route. The UK plans to provide two Bailey Bridges (prefabricated bridges) that can be installed at Wergesa and Woldiya. The convoys are now going as far north as Mekele, and may reach Adigrat by the end of April.

Despite the difficulties this route presents-- the distances are longer and the roads are not as good as they are in the north --the donor community is hopeful that this route will continue to supply a steady stream of food to northern Wollo and Tigray. Although the TPLF and the government have been fighting in the region, the battles are occurring well away from the food transport route. The bridge repairs at Wergesa and Woldiya are expected to be completed within a few weeks, after which the southern corridor will carry enough food for the JRP to feed almost 1 million people each month.

Still, there are large numbers of people, particularly in Eritrea, who are not being reached, and there are concerns that the food pipeline may not be sufficient to keep the southern route operating at maximum capacity. The U.S. Government is trying to coordinate the timing of food deliveries with other donors to ensure that the pipeline stays full.

The Ethiopian government has proposed an airlift to bring supplies to Asmara, since the city is cut off from outside supplies. The international donor community is considering funding a modest airlift, but plans have not been finalized.

Relief workers now believe that the situation in Tigray may be less critical than was originally believed. People are not leaving their home villages in large numbers, a sign that they are not yet desperate, although many are severely malnourished. Insurgent relief organizations are providing food in Tigray, some of which comes from surpluses in western and southern Tigray. Although very little information about Wollo has been available, it appears that the harvest was not as badly disrupted by the fighting as was expected. Relief authorities are still trying to quantify the needs in Wollo.

The rainy season may start as early as mid-June, making it difficult to move food out of the major cities and off the main roads. Approximately 500,000 MT of food have been pledged to the relief effort to date.

Situation by Province

Eritrea: The midsummer rains both sustain the crops planted in the "belg" rainy season (from February to April) and also prepare the ground for the second planting. In 1989, less than a quarter of the usual amount of rain fell in July. Some rain fell in highland areas in August, but it was too late to help the major crops.

The Hamasen awraja (district) of which Asmara is the capital, was most affected by the drought and lost almost all of its crops. In several other districts losses are expected to be above 60%. The FAO assessment team predicted that cereal and pulse production for the whole province will not be greater than 50,000 MT, or about 20% of a good year.

The GPDRE's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) added 500,000 people in and around Asmara to its original estimate of 1.25 million people needing food assistance in Eritrea. USAID/Addis Ababa has maintained its figure of 2.1 million people at risk.

Tigray: Meteorological data and initial assessment surveys suggested that Tigray would harvest only 50% of its usual crop. Parts of western Tigray received normal amounts of rain during 1989, and there are significant grain surpluses in some areas. Central and northeastern Tigray, along with some parts of the south had very bad harvests. USAID assessments indicate that 1.4 million people in Tigray will be affected by the drought. More recent figures from the GPDRE estimate that 799,360 people will need food in Tigray. This year's weather patterns look more promising. The belg rains were ample, and early harvest figures are good.

Wollo: Fighting between the GPDRE and the rebels has been the major cause of disruption in agricultural production, although the region also endured a dry spell in May and June. According to the FAO assessment, lowland Wollo and northern Wollo suffered serious crop damage. The team estimated that the harvest for the whole province would reach 85% of a normal harvest. USAID/Addis Ababa calculated that 1.4 million people in the region will be at risk, while the GPDRE now estimates that 301,600 would need assistance. Although it has been difficult to get information on Wollo due to the fighting, it now appears that last year's harvest was better than expected, and the number at risk is believed to be much lower than early estimates. This year's belg rains were good, and recent reports indicate that there are surpluses in some parts of the region.

Gondar: Very little information is available. While the lowland areas in southeast Gondar were damaged, the province should have an overall production 10% higher than last year's crop. The hostilities between government forces and the rebels has also affected the food supply. The RRC puts the number of people needing assistance at 122,930.

Hararge: Low rainfall resulted in crop losses in eastern and western Hararge. The RRC estimates that 568,450 people are affected in the province.

Gojjam and *Gamo Gofa:* Pockets in Gojjam suffered crop damage, but local surpluses may compensate for deficits in other parts of the region. It appears that the harvest will be about 7% shy of last year's crop.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

On Oct. 14, 1989, U.S. Charge Robert G. Houdek declared a disaster due to conditions of severe drought which could lead to famine in northern Ethiopia. A.I.D.'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance has made the following grants for drought relief:

Funding for two contractors to assess trucking and transport of relief food in northern Ethiopia	$24,209
Grant to Redd Barna for relief food for northern Ethiopia	$1,500,000
Grant to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for JRP for 5 2600 gallon water tanker trucks for northern Ethiopia, at a cost of $314,600 plus $82,350 for transport	$396,950
Grant to CRS for program activities in support of the JRP in northern Ethiopia	$451,867
Grant to CRS for purchase of six trucks and spare parts for the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS)/JRP, to be used for emergency food distribution	$588,538
Provision and transport for 30,000 blankets and 375 rolls of plastic sheeting to the Christian Relief Development Agency (CRDA) for use in displaced persons camps in northern Ethiopia	$273,750
Funding for a contractor to support the USAID mission's relief efforts in Addis Ababa for two months, starting Jan.19.	$19,299
TOTAL OFDA	$3,254,613

Food for Peace Assistance

To date, A.I.D.'s Office of Food for Peace has authorized 233,200 MT of food whose total value is approximately $125,000,000. These commodities will be distributed through PVOs.

The first shipments of USG food totalling 28,800 MT arrived in Ethiopia in early January 1990. A total of 105,633 MT is expected to arrive by the end of April. The remaining amount is scheduled to arrive before August.

TOTAL FFP	$125,000,000
TOTAL USG	$128,254,613

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EC - has pledged to provide 174,895 MT of cereal grains, and 5,400 MT of supplementary foods, to be shipped to Ethiopia between November 1989 and March 1990. The EC also made a cash grant of $11,600,000 for inland transport of emergency food, non food relief supplies, and increasing emergency food storage capacity. The total EC contribution from Nov. 1989 to March 1990 was $66,395,000, including 203,464 MT of food aid.

FAO - committed $170,000 for a technical cooperation project.

UNICEF - issued an appeal for $9,000,000 of non-food assistance for northern Ethiopia, including $2,200,000 million for drugs, $1,500,000 for water supply, $1,750,000 for supplementary food, $1,850,000 for shelter materials, $1,500,000 for disaster preparedness measures, and $250,000 for program support.

WFP - pledged 7,000 MT of wheat scheduled to arrive in November, and 20,000 MT of wheat expected to arrive in December.

Governments
Australia - pledged $5,000,000 to buy 8,000 MT of wheat, 1,500 MT of flour, 55 MT of high protein biscuits, medical supplies and other food purchases for northern Ethiopia.

Canada - pledged $2,558,700 for food and transport costs, and 25,000 MT of food. In early March, Canadian officials announced a pledge of $18,000,000 for famine relief.

Denmark - committed $900,000 to the Danish Red Cross for purchase and transport of food for northern Ethiopia. The grant will be administered by the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS). The Government of Denmark also made a grant of $2,100,000 to two Danish NGO's. Half of the grant will be channeled through the Danish church's emergency agency. This money will be spent on medical supplies, food, tents, and clothes. The other half will be channeled through a Danish NGO for the purchase, renovation, and shipment of trucks to be used to transport emergency supplies.

Finland - pledged $1,035,000 to purchase food through the League of Red Cross Societies.

Germany, Fed. Rep. of - pledged 5,000 MT of wheat, and an additional 5,000 MT of sorghum.

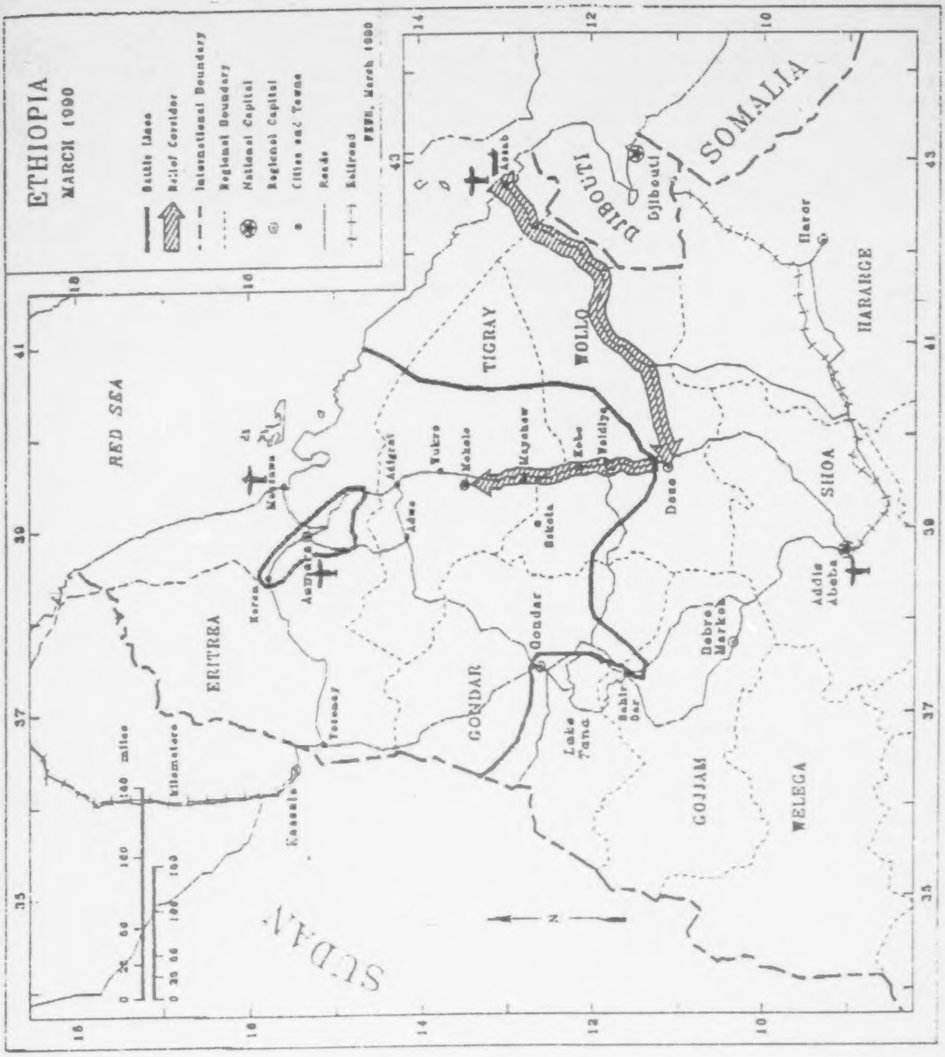
The Netherlands - pledged $10,600,000 for emergency aid to northern Ethiopia, to be split between Dutch PVOs, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, and the World Food Program (WFP)

United Kingdom - pledged a total of 17,300 MT of cereals, 10,000 MT of wheat flour, and emergency aid worth $17,900,000 in 1990.

Non-Governmental Organizations
Caritas - pledged 4,200 MT of wheat.

TOTAL INTERNATIONAL $124,658,700

for Andrew S. Natsios
Director
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance


ETHIOPIA
MARCH 1990
Battle lines
Relief Corridor
International Boundary
Regional Boundary
National Capital
Regional Capital
Cities and Towns
Roads
Railroad
FEWS, March 1990
RED SEA
ERITREA
Keren
Asmara
Massawa
Tessenei
Kassala
Adigrat
Adwa
Wukro
Mekele
Maychew
Sekota
Kobo
Weldiya
Dese
TIGRAY
WOLLO
GONDAR
Gondar
Lake Tana
Bahir Dar
Debre Markos
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AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

SITUATION REPORT NO. 9 **12:00 noon** **May 7, 1990**

ETHIOPIA - Drought

Note: New information is underlined

Date: Poor rains, civil war and other complications in the summer and fall of 1989 leading to severe food shortages beginning in early 1990

Areas Affected: Northern Ethiopia, principally Eritrea and parts of Tigray, and Wollo, Gondar, and Harerge (see attached map)

Summary of Assistance:

U.S. Government	$89,194,505
International Community	$124,658,700
TOTAL	$213,853,205

Number of Affected Persons

Revised estimates by international agencies suggest that between 3-4 million people may be at risk in Ethiopia, in both government areas and insurgent-held territory. This figure does not include refugees from neighboring countries staying in Ethiopia.

General Situation

Poor rainfall in Eritrea and Tigray during the summer of 1989 led to severely diminished harvests in both provinces. The dismal agricultural situation is exacerbated by war. Through most of the fall and winter, government troops fought sporadically with Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces. On Feb. 8, 1990, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) attacked and ultimately captured the key northern port of Massawa, and other areas in Eritrea. The Ethiopian government has made several attempts to recover the port, but has been unsuccessful. In late April, the government launched a major offensive against the port. While the outcome of the attack is still unclear, it does not appear that the government will regain control of the port. The Ethiopian Government continues to hold the towns of Keren and Asmara in Eritrea. Asmara has been cut off from resupply overland, and the government of Ethiopia has been maintaining the city by airlifts from the south. Some private and non-governmental organizations have organized small airlifts carrying relief supplies for Asmara. Asmara has been facing shortages of fuel, electricity, and food, and large numbers of people fleeing the fighting have entered the city. The government still holds the strategic city and air force base at Bahir Dar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, although reports indicate that the airfield is heavily damaged. Recent fighting between the TPLF and government troops in North Shoa has not resulted in significant changes to the battle lines.

Massawa port was damaged by the February fighting, although initial reports indicated the port could still receive ships. However, over the last several weeks, the Ethiopian Government has been heavily bombing the port, and with the latest attack it is not clear how much damage it has sustained. No relief supplies are currently coming through the port. The World Food Program

(WFP) reported that there were 45,460 MT of food stocks in the port at the time of the February attack that were probably lost to the relief effort. The EPLF offered to make Massawa an open city for relief purposes. The international donor community has urged the Ethiopian government to agree. The European Community, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States have issued a joint statement of principles calling on all parties to facilitate relief, including opening all ports in Ethiopia. The Soviet Union has endorsed the statement.

In March, the RRC (Relief and Rehabilitation Commission) and the TPLF agreed to let JRP (Joint Relief Partnership) convoys go into Tigray from the government controlled town of Dese in southern Wollo. The first convoy made the trip on March 21. As of May 6, a total of 10,310 MT had moved up this route. Road crews have graded the road at Wergesa where the bridge had washed out, with the result that trailers bearing much greater loads can now travel this route. The UK plans to provide two Bailey bridges (prefabricated bridges) that can be installed at Wergesa and Woldiya. The convoys are now going as far north as Mekelle, and they are averaging about 8,000 MT per month. The JRP plans to increase the amount to 11,000 MT per month in May. The JRP has been distributing food from this supply route mainly in north Wello; since there are other sources of food in Tigray, the JRP has been stockpiling the material coming up the southern route for Tigray against future needs.

Despite the difficulties this route presents--the distances are longer and the roads are not as good as they are in the north--the donor community is hopeful that this route will continue to supply a steady stream of food to northern Wollo and Tigray. Although the TPLF and the government have been fighting in the region, the battles are occurring away from the food transport route. The GPDRE has agreed to allow fuel tankers to accompany the convoy, so that the trucks can travel longer distances without worrying about refueling. There have been some organizational difficulties between the JRP and the WTOE (which provides trucks for the southern route) which have prevented the use of all available trucks, but the international community is working on resolving the problem. The Bailey bridges at Wergesa and Woldiya are expected to be in place in approximately two months, after which the southern route should carry up to 15,000 MT per month.

Still, there are people, particularly in Eritrea, who are not being reached, and there are concerns that the food pipeline may not be sufficient to keep all delivery routes operating at maximum capacity. The U.S. Government is trying to coordinate the timing of food deliveries with other donors to ensure that the pipeline stays full.

Overall, the population in Eritrea is holding up, but reports indicate that rural Eritreans living in government territory are receiving little or no food. There are no reports of serious nutrition problems yet, and food is still available, although expensive. Prices in Asmara are reported to be at least three times their normal value; outside Asmara prices drop sharply. One observer reported that some of the displaced Tigrayans in Asmara were leaving the city for Tigray, in the hope that food prospects would be better there.

The Ethiopian government has proposed an airlift to bring supplies to Asmara, since the city is cut off from outside supplies. The JRP has received EC funding for 15 flights bringing supplementary food to Asmara. The Christian Relief Development Agency (CRDA) has funding for 28 flights, which have already begun, carrying high energy biscuits, faffa, fuel, and medicine. On May 3, UNICEF sent an Ethiopian Airlines plane to Asmara carrying equipment, fuel, and medical supplies, using funds from the $1.5 million emergency transport fund held by WFP since 1988. The U.N. has also issued an appeal for support from donors for a two month airlift for Asmara.

Relief workers now believe that the situation in Tigray may be less critical than was originally believed. People are not leaving their home villages in large numbers, a sign that they are not yet desperate, although many are still at risk. Insurgent relief organizations are providing food in Tigray, some of which comes from surpluses in western and southern Tigray. Although very little information about Wollo has been available, it appears that the harvest was not as badly disrupted by the fighting as was expected. Relief authorities are still trying to quantify the needs in Wollo.

The rainy season may start as early as mid-June, making it difficult to move food out of the major cities and off the main roads. Approximately 530,000 MT of food has been pledged to the relief effort to date.

Situation by Province

Eritrea: The midsummer rains both sustain the crops planted in the "belg" rainy season (from February to April) and also prepare the ground for the second planting. In 1989, less than a quarter of the usual amount of rain fell in July. Some rain fell in highland areas in August, but it was too late to help the major crops.

The Hamasen awraja (district) of which Asmara is the capital, was most affected by the drought and lost almost all of its crops. In several other districts losses are expected to be above 60%. The FAO assessment team predicted that cereal and pulse production for the whole province will not be greater than 50,000 MT, or about 20% of a good year.

The GPDRE's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) added 500,000 people in and around Asmara to its original estimate of 1.25 million people needing food assistance in Eritrea. USAID/Addis Ababa has issued a new estimate of 1.7 million people at risk in Eritrea.

Tigray: Meteorological data and initial assessment surveys suggested that Tigray would harvest only 50% of its usual crop. Parts of western Tigray received normal amounts of rain during 1989, and there are significant grain surpluses in some areas. Central and northeastern Tigray, along with some parts of the south, had very bad harvests. New USAID assessments indicate that 1.1 million people in Tigray will be affected by the drought. More recent figures from the GPDRE estimate that 799,360 people will need food in Tigray. This year's weather patterns look more promising. The belg rains were ample, and early harvest figures are good.

Wollo: Fighting between the GPDRE and the rebels was feared to have caused major disruption in agricultural production, although the region also endured a dry spell in May and June. According to the FAO assessment, lowland Wollo and northern Wollo suffered serious crop damage. The team estimated that the harvest for the whole province would reach 85% of a normal harvest. USAID/Addis Ababa initially calculated that 1.4 million people in the region will be at risk, while the GPDRE estimated that 301,600 would need assistance. Although it has been difficult to get information on Wollo due to the fighting, it now appears that last year's harvest was better than expected, and the number at risk is believed to be much lower than early estimates. The USAID mission believes only 200,000 people in Wollo will need relief assistance. This year's belg rains were good, and recent reports indicate that there are surpluses in some parts of the region.

Gondar: Very little information is available. While the lowland areas in southeast Gondar were damaged, the province should have an overall production 10% higher than last year's crop. The hostilities between government forces and the rebels has also affected the food supply. The RRC puts the number of people needing assistance at 122,930.

Harerge: Low rainfall resulted in crop losses in eastern and western Harerge. The RRC estimates that 568,450 people are affected in the province.

Gojjam and *Gamo Gofa:* Pockets in Gojjam suffered crop damage, but local surpluses may compensate for deficits in other parts of the region. It appears that the harvest will be about 7% shy of last year's crop.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

On Oct. 14, 1989, U.S. Charge Robert G. Houdek declared a disaster due to conditions of severe drought which could lead to famine in northern Ethiopia. A.I.D.'s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance has made the following grants for drought relief:

Funding for five contractors to support relief operations	$127,892
Funding for two contractors to assess trucking and transport of relief food in northern Ethiopia	$24,209
Grant to Redd Barna for relief food purchases for northern Ethiopia	$1,500,000
Grant to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for JRP for five 2600 gallon water tanker trucks for northern Ethiopia, at a cost of $314,600 plus $82,350 for transport	$396,950
Grant to CRS for program activities in support of the JRP in northern Ethiopia	$451,867
Grant to CRS for purchase of six trucks and spare	

parts for the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS)/JRP, to be used for emergency food distribution $588,538

Provision and transport for 30,000 blankets and 375 rolls of plastic sheeting to the Christian Relief Development Agency (CRDA) for use in displaced persons camps in northern Ethiopia $273,750

Funding for a contractor to support the USAID mission's relief efforts in Addis Ababa for two months, starting Jan.19. . . . . $19,299

TOTAL OFDA $3,382,505

Food for Peace Assistance
To date, A.I.D.'s Office of Food for Peace has authorized 216,200 MT of food whose total value is approximately $85,812,000. (Shifts in transport costs, and closure of some options account for lower figures.) These commodities are distributed through PVOs.

Thus far, a total of 126,613 MT of USG food has arrived. The remaining amount is scheduled to arrive before August.

TOTAL FFP $85,812,000

TOTAL USG $89,194,505

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations
EC - has pledged to provide 161,715 MT of relief food. The total EC contribution from Nov. 1989 to March 1990 was $66,395,000.

FAO - committed $170,000 for a technical cooperation project.

WFP - pledged 7,000 MT of wheat scheduled to arrive in November, and 20,000 MT of wheat expected to arrive in December.

Governments
Australia - pledged $5,000,000 to buy 8,000 MT of wheat, 1,500 MT of flour, 55 MT of high protein biscuits, medical supplies and other food purchases for northern Ethiopia.

Canada - pledged $2,558,700 for food and transport costs, and 25,000 MT of food. In early March, Canadian officials announced a pledge of $18,000,000 for famine relief.

Denmark - committed $900,000 to the Danish Red Cross for purchase and transport of food for northern Ethiopia. The grant will be administered by the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS). The Government of Denmark also made a grant of $2,100,000 to two Danish NGO's. Half of the grant will be channeled through the Danish church's emergency agency. This money will be spent on medical supplies, food, tents, and clothes. The other half will be channeled through a Danish NGO for the purchase, renovation, and shipment of trucks to be used to transport emergency supplies.

Finland - pledged $1,035,000 to purchase food through the League of Red Cross Societies.

Germany, Fed. Rep. of - pledged 5,000 MT of wheat, and an additional 5,000 MT of sorghum.

The Netherlands - pledged $10,600,000 for emergency aid to northern Ethiopia, to be split between Dutch PVOs, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, and the World Food Program (WFP)

United Kingdom - pledged a total of 16,300 MT of cereals, 10,000 MT of wheat flour, and emergency aid worth $17,900,000 in 1990. Pledged an additional 10,000 MT of emergency food bringing total 1990 emergency food to 36,300.

Non-Governmental Organizations
Caritas - pledged 4,200 MT of wheat.

TOTAL INTERNATIONAL $124,658,700

Andrew S. Natsios

Andrew S. Natsios
Director
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CLOUGH, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

In today's testimony I will concentrate on four issues:

(1) the difficulties of finding out what's really going on inside Ethiopia;

(2) the dilemmas created by a situation in which the international community places a greater value on the welfare of a country's citizens than does that country's government;

(3) the dangers that arise when symbolism and appearances begin to drive relief operations; and

(4) the prospects for superpower cooperation in Ethiopia.

I

It is almost impossible to know what is really going on in Ethiopia these days. Because of the war and government travel restrictions, it is impossible to travel freely in most parts of Ethiopia. As my associates and I discovered when we attempted to drive from Addis Ababa to Dese to view relief transport operations, roads that are safe one day can be closed the next. Those who do travel outside of Addis Ababa must out of necessity depend on either the government, the opposition parties, or relief agencies for logistical support. Such dependence inevitably limits what one sees and often colors what one reports.

Both the government and its opponents see reports on relief requirements and distribution programs as weapons that can be used to extract international assistance and win (or lose) international support. Half a decade of experience has made all parties in Ethiopia experts on the politics of relief reporting. This makes it difficult to trust reports written by, for, or with the assistance of government agencies and the relief arms of the opposition parties.

Despite these problems, I do not think lack of information is a major problem. Effective relief operations require two kinds of information: information about relief needs and information about distribution operations. There is no longer a serious risk that significant areas of famine will go unnoticed or unreported. Too many agencies now have too much access and too great an interest in drawing attention to famine affected areas for this to happen. On the other hand, it is unlikely to ever be possible to monitor distribution programs thoroughly enough to prevent diversion of relief supplies. But gross abuses are difficult to hide over extended periods.

Improved reporting would be helpful, but it would not address the most pressing problems affecting relief operations.

II

The most vexing issue concerning relief programs in Ethiopia (and the Sudan) arises from the fact that international donors and their constituents attach a higher value to ensuring the delivery of relief supplies to affected populations - especially those in areas no longer controlled by the government - than do the men in power in Addis Ababa. This places the donors in a very difficult position. The government can subtly threaten to allow its population to starve to death unless donors provide aid on the terms and conditions set out by the government. In less obviously Machiavellian ways, the government has played on the humanitarian impulses of Western donors' to get resources into the country - food and trucks - that indirectly ease the war's burden on the population and economy. The relief issue can also be manipulated - as it has been in the Sudan - to discourage criticism of a government for human rights violations.

The dilemma is obvious: The greatest threat to humanitarian interests in Ethiopia is the war; and relief operations make it easier for the government to continue the war. The same is true for relief to areas controlled by the EPLF and TPLF. Without cross border relief operations, neither of party would be able to meet the food needs of the population in the areas it controls. By providing such relief, the international community makes it easier for these parties to consolidate their positions and continue the war.

There is no easy answer to this problem. I think it is a mistake, however, to pretend that relief can be nonpolitical; or to build a policy on the principle that getting relief to distressed populations must always be given priority. Open and honest discussion of this issue is the best way to ensure that good intentions do not produce bad policies. Trade-offs between relief needs and other concerns should be made explicit.

III

The problems with relief operations are not all located in

Africa. Most donors are motivated by genuine humanitarian concerns; and the individuals who run operations on the ground are almost without exception outstanding. But relief has become such a highly visible political issue in the United States and other Western countries that symbolism and appearances can become as important as substance.

The rewards, political and otherwise, of being in the forefront of getting relief to the sexiest areas have begun to influence how much support is available for which populations. For example, several relief officials in Ethiopia reported pressures from home to be sure that their organization's food was on the first trucks into Tigre.

When relief efforts begin to be motivated as much by the interests of donors in being able to give as by the needs of distressed populations, the real objectives of relief begin to be forgotten. It has become a cliche to say that the best relief is assistance that makes future relief unnecessary. But this point cannot be made often enough. The question that should be asked of each and every relief organizations is: what are they doing to make themselves obsolete? One of the best ways of judging them is by examining their efforts to create and strengthen local non-government organizations.

IV

The idea of a joint U.S.-Soviet effort to ensure relief deliveries to affected areas in Ethiopia has gained support in recent months. This is a laudable idea. But I am not sure it is viable; and I question whether it will get us closer to lasting solutions to Ethiopia's problems.

The political situation inside the Soviet Union makes it very difficult to believe that the Soviet government is in a position to play a major role in relief operations in Ethiopia. As a colleague of mine repeatedly asks, "Do you think there is a piece of paper on Gorbachev's desk that says Ethiopia on it." The same is true to a lesser extent in the United States. I have no doubt that the Bush administration is sincerely committed to the relief effort in Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn. I am skeptical that it is willing to put this issue at the top of the U.S.-Soviet agenda.

More fundamentally, I find the idea of a superpower-led initiative at odds with changing international and regional realities. In one way or another, both the United States and the Soviet Union are reducing their commitments in Africa. The one recent case where they cooperated effectively - Namibia/Angola - involved an effort to resolve a conflict that had become a burden for both countries. In the Horn, effective cooperation would require them to assume new responsibilities. Moreover, other actors such as Japan (and in different ways in the Horn, Israel and the Arab states) are becoming more important. Effective initiatives will require more than the agreement of the supperpowers.

VI

What is required in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the Horn is a fundamental rethinking of relief strategy. Ways need to be found to place the burden for ending the victimization of the Ethiopian population where it belongs: on Ethiopians. This does not mean we should shut down existing relief operations. It does mean that we should rethink our willingness to provide relief at all costs. Ultimately, the greatest leverage the international community has over the parties in Ethiopia is the threat of relief agencies to say it is no longer possible to operate there. This leverage should be not dismissed.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID HOLDRIDGE, SENIOR-DIRECTOR, AFRICA REGION, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES-USCC

Chairman Dorgan, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to speak as a representative of Catholic Relief Services on the current situation in Ethiopia.

The international community's early warning systems operated effectively in predicting and monitoring the current drought in northern Ethiopia. In July 1989, the U.N. warned donors of the inevitable failure of the harvest due to a prolonged dry spell in May, June, and July. In September, the World Food Programme predicted crop failures as serious as in 1988 and originally appealed for 221,000 metric tons of emergency food aid for 1.5 million Eritreans and a minimum of 21,000 metric tons for 200,000 Tigrayians. By the end of November, when the U.N. estimated that 3.5 to 4 million people in northern Ethiopia would require 630,000 tons of food assistance during 1990, donors had already begun committing donations of food aid to be distributed by various relief organizations, including the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP), a consortium of Ethiopian Church agencies, Catholic Relief Services, and Lutheran World Federation.

In Eritrea, the JRP - through the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat of Asmara (ECS) - began distributing United States emergency food aid received at Massawa Port in late December. Because of the experience gained during the last five years and training provided by CRS and other organizations, ECS was able to reach 690,000 beneficiaries in January with the aim of reaching one million by April 1990.

As a major provider of humanitarian assistance in northern Ethiopia, the JRP's principal aim is to bring relief supplies to those individuals at the greatest risk of starvation due to civil war and chronic drought. In January and February of this year, the JRP entered into negotiations with the Government of Ethiopia, the TPLF, and the EPLF with the aim of opening a corridor of "safe passage" from Massawa port to drought-affected areas in northern Tigray. The JRP's goal was to reach 600,000 people per month in the hard-hit areas of northern and eastern Tigray province.

After Massawa was captured by the EPLF on February 8th, the focus of these negotiations shifted to an alternate route for food delivery to northern Ethiopia referred to as the "Southern Corridor" running from the port of Assab (370 miles northeast of Addis Ababa), through northern Wello, and into eastern Tigray. On March 8th, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of the Ethiopian Government reported that it had agreed to allow relief assistance to be transported from Assab port into northern Wello and Tigray. Five days later, the TPLF announced that it welcomed the JRP into areas controlled by the rebels to implement an independent humanitarian operation.

The stage had been set for an historic undertaking by CRS and the JRP. On March 20th, eleven trucks - marked with JRP insignia and flags and carrying 110 metric tons of relief supplies - rolled out of the Government-controlled town of Dessie in southern Wello, across the front lines, and into territory held by the rebels. An advance team of Ethiopian Church leaders accompanied the first convoy as far as Kobo, in northern Wello, where the first commodities were off-loaded. The team continued into Tigray and traveled as far as Makelle and Adigrat to meet with representatives of the Church and the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), the humanitarian arm of the TPLF. Their mission was to assess both the needs of the civilian population in eastern Tigray and the capacities of REST and the local Church in receiving, storing, and distributing relief assistance provided by the JRP.

Abba Kidane, the team leader and director of the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat in Addis Ababa, returned to Dessie eight days later and reported that the Church in Tigray and REST were prepared to work together to ensure the effective implementation of the JRP's emergency program in

Tigray. He also reported that the situation in eastern Tigray, along the road from Maychew to Adigrat, was not as extreme as the donor community had feared. Food stocks were perilously low, and people were hungry and increasingly despondent; however, families had not yet starting moving away from their homes in search of food, and the children and elderly had not yet begun to die of starvation.

Abba Kidane's report confirmed that famine and large-scale starvation in Tigray could be averted. Though the severe drought had brought the population in Tigray very close to the edge of starvation, food supplies transported by REST from the Sudan frontier and small surpluses of cereals purchased in western Tigray had made the difference. It was clear, however, that REST's supply line would have to be increased - both from the Sudan and through the new Southern Corridor - to prevent a rapid deterioration in the population's nutritional status.

As confidence in the JRP's Southern Corridor operation began to grow, pledges of support and cooperation from the NGO community, bi-lateral donors, and the United Nations also increased. By the end of the first week, over 600 tons of commodities had been delivered across rebel lines to northern Wello. On April 2, a fleet of U.N. trucks joined the JRP convoy increasing daily capacity to over 200 tons. The U.N.

also sent heavy equipment across the lines to repair sections of vital roads and bridges between Kobo in northern Wello and Makelle in Tigray.

During the week of April 10, there was heavy fighting reported between Government and TPLF forces very close to the Addis-Dessie road. Although this road was temporarily cut, the Southern Corridor was not affected. In fact, fifty-six U.N. trucks were able to reach the town of Makelle in northern Tigray and off-load 761 tons of commodities on Tuesday, April 17th. While increased military activity in the staging area threatens daily the continued success of the Southern Corridor operation, more than 65 convoys of trucks have transported over 10,000 tons of relief supplies into rebel-held areas since March 20th. At present, approximately 90 trucks contributed by CRS, LWF, Save the Children, Oxfam, and other NGO's as well as by the U.N. are now working full-time on this operation. The JRP's target is to deliver 15,000 tons per months to approximately one million beneficiaries in northern Wello and Tigray between April and December.

In general, the prognosis for Tigray province is good. With emergency food aid provided by both REST's cross border operation and the JRP's Southern Corridor initiative, famine will be averted. Moreover, REST is implementing a major agricultural rehabilitation program funded by our Catholic partner agency in Britain, CAFOD, and by other members of the international donor community, that we hope will bring a measure of long-term food security to the Tigrayan people. Obviously, the continued effectiveness of the Southern Corridor operation depends solely on the goodwill and willingness of both sides to allow the JRP convoys to move freely across the front lines into rebel-held areas.

However, we remain very concerned about the situation in Eritrea province. Since the capture of Massawa by the EPLF on February 8th, the general condition of Eritreans living in areas controlled by the Government of Ethiopia and in contested territory has deteriorated rapidly. While the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) - the humanitarian wing of the EPLF - is providing some relief assistance to Eritreans residing in rebel-held areas in Eritrea, CRS and its Church partners are increasingly concerned about the situation of those residing in the major Government held towns, especially the provincial capital of Asmara. Latest reports indicate that over 400,000 people in Asmara are in need of relief assistance. As of April 25th, stocks available to the Catholic Church for distribution to the most needy in Asmara had dwindled to less than 8,000 tons. The Church continues to reach roughly 100,000 per month but has targeted only the very poor and truly indigent in order to preserve its scarce stocks.

CRS has also received reports from Asmara that fighting between the Government and the rebels has been very heavy on the road from Asmara to Massawa around the towns of Nefasit and Ghinda. The Church has indicated there is a growing number of displaced persons in these two towns in need of relief supplies. Though access to this area by the Church is formally prohibited, the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat of Asmara (ECS/Asmara) has received permission from the RRC and the regional military command for one ECS truck to enter the battle area daily with relief assistance. Since March 1st, ECS has delivered approximately 200 tons of United States donated food to over 20,000 beneficiaries in these beleaguered towns.

There is consensus in the donor community that the reopening of the port of Massawa is critical if famine and starvation in Eritrea are to be averted. While the EPLF has proposed that the port be taken over and managed by the U.N., the Ethiopian Government has unequivocally refused to agree to this arrangement. In fact, the Government has stated publicly its intention of reclaiming the port and, to this end, has continued aerial bombings of the port since mid-February. Assuming a settlement cannot be reached that will allow donor agencies to use Massawa port, there are three options for bringing relief assistance to Eritrea: namely, (1) increased assistance to the cross border operation from

Sudan, (2) emergency airlifts to Asmara from Addis Ababa, Assab or Djibouti, and (3) expansion of the Southern Corridor operation from Dessie, through Tigray, and into Eritrea.

CRS's emergency relief strategy in northern Ethiopia adjusts almost daily to rapidly changing events in this war-torn country. Unless CRS, its Church partners, and other organizations are allowed to move quickly to implement all possible options for bringing relief assistance to Tigray and Eritrea, perhaps hundreds of thousands will starve before the next harvest. Under these circumstances, CRS urges the United States Government and all other concerned parties to press for the following:

- immediate agreement among all parties for the re-opening of Massawa to receive relief shipments from donor agencies;

- increased bi-lateral and multi-lateral support to the crossborder operations managed by ERA and REST;

- agreement by the Government and the rebels to allow the JRP's Southern Corridor initiative to continue uninterrupted; and

- agreement by all parties that the JRP, with equally high credibility among both donors and recipients as a non-partisan humanitarian organization, be the sole distributor of relief supplies provided by road and by air to the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

CRS again urges the United States and other donor governments to commit resources immediately to the JRP and to both ERA and REST. While we are encouraged by the limited success of the JRP's Southern Corridor operation, much more assistance must be brought in through the cross border operation to both Tigray and Eritrea to meet the current and project needs.

With cooperation and support from the international community and assurances of safe passage - by road and air - for emergency relief assistance, large-scale famine resulting from drought and civil war can be averted. Long-term solutions to the political crisis must be found, however, before the Ethiopian people can begin to address the problems of chronic underdevelopment and crippling poverty.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GAYLE SMITH, THE DEVELOPMENT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE POLICIES, INC., THE DEVELOPMENT GAP

Introduction

I would like to thank the Select Committee on Hunger for this opportunity to testify on the famine situation in Ethiopia and the status of the ongoing international relief effort. For the information of the Committee, I have worked in the region for most of the last ten years. My work has included five years as a journalist, covering military, political and economic developments in the region for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Associated Press, Boston Globe, Miami Herald, Toronto Globe and Mail, Observer (London) and others, and another five years as a consultant to various relief and development agencies working in the region, among them Lutheran World Relief, Dutch Interchurch Aid, Euro Action ACORD and the Emergency Relief Desk. My work with the Emergency Relief Desk and its partner organization, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) included undertaking the first internal purchase operation in 1983. I am presently the Coordinator of the Africa Development Project for The Development Group for Alternative Policies in Washington, DC.

I will confine my comments to the situation in the regions of Eritrea and Tigray, as I am most familiar with these. Since 1980, I have made over ten visits to these two areas, most recently in February of this year.

The scope of the current crisis

The situation in Ethiopia today is quite precarious. Famine has once again descended upon the landscape with grave consequences for the country's farmers, particularly those in the northern region of Tigray and in Eritrea. Significantly, these areas are affected by long-running wars which have consistently removed able-bodied producers from the agricultural to the military sector, disrupted local transportation and marketing systems, displaced producers and wreaked havoc on already marginal lands. In addition, the fact that rehabilitation assistance did not materialize following the 1984-85 crisis has meant that a majority of peasant producers in the region have been unable to produce even a limited surplus while a significant number have been unable to regain their self-sufficiency in food production.

As a result of these factors, the rural populations of Eritrea and Tigray were left economically vulnerable to the localized drought of the last two years. Crop failure has been estimated at 100 percent in parts of Eritrea, and ranged from 15 to 90 percent in Tigray during this season. The situation in Wollo is also thought to be critical, although the lack of regular on-site information from this province makes precise assessments difficult.

According to the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) and the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), indigenous organizations working in Eritrea and Tigray, respectively, the number of persons in need of assistance in Eritrea is 1.5 million, while the figure for Tigray stands at 2.2 million. The figure for Eritrea was revised upwards by 200,000 when the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) captured the port of Massawa and surrounding villages in February. Of the 2.2 million figure for Tigray, REST assumes responsibility for 1.6 million and the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP) program is attempting to meet the needs of the remaining 600,000.

In Eritrea, the famine crisis is exacerbated by continued fighting in the environs of Massawa and Asmara and along the highway connecting the two towns. In both Eritrea and Tigray, aerial bombardment is causing further loss of life, property damage and displacement, and is forcing cross-border relief convoys to restrict movement to nighttime hours only. The bombing of the port of Massawa has been particularly brutal and destructive, with attacks by the government air force occurring on an almost daily basis. Civilian targets have been hit repeatedly. The EPLF also claims that the Ethiopian air force has used napalm bombs in attacks on Massawa; while I cannot comment on this particular claim, I can state that I have witnessed the use of napalm by the Ethiopian air force on previous occasions.

Forecast for the coming months

Many in the relief community, as well as the majority of observers, continue to operate on the basis of the faulty assumption that over three million people in Eritrea and Tigray will drop dead if emergency assistance is not immediately forthcoming. It is true that what we are trying to do is to prevent starvation. Starvation, however, takes time, and is an immediate threat to only a portion of the total population in need.

Most of those counted as in need lost their last harvest. At this juncture, we are trying to prevent the affected population from having to employ 'last resort' coping mechanisms -- particularly, the sale of livestock and tools, the consumption of seeds or, at worst, migration away from productive land. If we are not successful, the possibility of starvation increases enormously, as each of these steps reduces the ability of the farmer to produce in the future. Comparisons to the crisis of 1984-85 are appropriate, but it may be some months before we witness starvation on that scale.

It is also important that we prevent, as far as possible, the migration of farmers from their lands. During the 1984-85 emergency more than 500,000 producers in Eritrea and Tigray abandoned their farms as a direct result of the famine. The majority fled to Sudan where relief assistance was more readily available. Tigray has recorded a higher incidence of migration in recent years, and while much of it is seasonal wage-labor migration, REST reported last fall that 50,000 farmers had moved from the east and south-central regions of Tigray towards the west because of famine conditions. In February of this year farmers were given the option of migrating to the west, where a grain surplus is available, before the rainy season. According to reports from the field, some movement has already taken place.

Two factors will affect the plight of the civilian population in need during the coming months. The onset of the rainy season in late May or early June will cause a decrease in the volume of assistance transported into Eritrea and Tigray. It is therefore important that as much assistance as possible be made available now. An additional problem will be posed by the spread of measles and meningitis. Measles was the primary cause of death for as many as 60 percent of the children who died during the last famine; meningitis occurs in epidemic proportions each year during this time. In order to decrease the death rate among a highly vulnerable population, donors should be considering the provision of vaccinations and attendant supplies as soon as possible.

The cross-border operations

The most effective channels available to the international community at this point in time are the cross border programs mounted from eastern Sudan into Eritrea and Tigray. Operational for over a decade, these programs have received the tacit support of successive Sudanese governments interested in inhibiting the flow of refugees into already crowded camps dotting the Sudanese-Ethiopian border. Cross border efforts are supported by a number of NGO networks including the Emergency Relief Desk, the CAFOD network, the Oxfams, the Eritrea Inter-Agency Consortium and the

Tigray Transport and Agriculture Consortium, as well as by individual NGOs. Several NGO donors channel government and/or EEC funding to the cross border programs.

These programs have proven to be extremely effective. Considerable local expertise in disaster management has been gained over the years and affected communities are actively involved in relief assessments and aid programs. Both ERA and REST, which operate as the sole implementors of relief programs in their respective areas, allow full donor access to their operations and regularly invite donors to monitor relief and development programs. Given the present military situation, which finds the Ethiopian government restricted to major towns in Eritrea and with no presence in Tigray, the cross border programs also provide the most efficient means for reaching needy populations.

While the ERA and REST programs are similar in their juxtaposition to operations mounted from the Ethiopian government side, however, it is important to note that they are distinct from one another. It should also be taken into account that their capacities, structures and programmatic priorities are different.

The internal purchase program

In early 1983 it became clear to REST and its donors that food aid in quantities sufficient to meet the relief needs at that time could not be moved into Tigray before the onset of the rainy season. REST requested that donors consider providing cash funds for the purchase of surplus grain available in Wolkeit, a fertile and thinly populated region of western Tigray. With an initial grant of US$ 100,000, the REST Internal Purchase Program was launched.

With western and other areas of Tigray producing an annual surplus even in times of famine, the Internal Purchase Program has been effective since it began. According to an independent crop assessment conducted by Oxfam UK, the amount of surplus available for purchase this year is in excess of 110,00 metric tons. REST has to date received funds for the purchase of just over 40,000 metric tons of the surplus.

The internal purchase program is effective for a number of reasons. It provides for a quick response and is competitive in terms of cost. (Many donors have registered concern at the relatively high cost per ton of grain inside Tigray. However, when the cost of shipment and local transport are taken into account, grain purchased inside Tigray is approximately the same price per ton as imported grain.) Donors have been able to monitor the program to their satisfaction.

Donor response to cross-border needs

ERA and REST have each outlined bulk food needs in excess of 320,000 metric tons. Should this aid be provided, farmers will be able to remain on their land and cultivate for the upcoming season. Conversely, a shortfall will mean a certain decrease in future production and an increase in the death rate, and will also cause farmers to sell off their tools and livestock, eat their seeds and, possibly, migrate. At present, ERA reports that just over 90,000 metric tons have been pledged or received; REST has received or been promised just under 90,000 metric tons and funding for an additional 40,000 metric tons purchased internally.

Recent months have seen a dramatic improvement in both the timing and scale of the donor response to cross border needs. However, less than 30 percent of the food needs are being met in these areas. Most observers agree that it is already too late to avert a major crisis from unfolding during the coming months. Meanwhile, little is being provided in the way of storage facilities, emergency medical supplies or the administrative assistance needed to facilitate communications and program implementation. The international response to requests for transport assistance has been particularly weak.

The need for transport assistance

It is imperative that food aid provided to ERA or REST be accompanied by transport assistance as the availability of transportation is the primary determinant of the capacity of these organizations. It should also be noted that the trucking fleets operated by these organizations serve relief needs but are also called upon to service development programs and to move the tools and seeds needed for rehabilitation efforts.

ERA's current truck fleet stands at 341, including 53 trucks that were scheduled to arrive in March-April of this year. The Eritrea Inter-Agency Consortium, a body of 12 donor agencies supporting ERA programs, recently commissioned a transport study which recommended that ERA's entire truck fleet should be replaced by 1993 and that, in light of the present emergency, 125 additional trucks should be ordered immediately.

REST's transport fleet currently includes 200 trucks running from the Sudanese border to depots inside Tigray and an additional 130 trucks working the routes from depots to distribution points within Tigray. A new contract has been signed for the hiring of an additional 150 commercial trucks, bringing to 250 the total number of commercial vehicles being utilized. Eighty of the 494 trucks requested in the proposal developed and circulated by the Tigray Transport and Agriculture

Consortium have been pledged, leaving outstanding need at over 400 vehicles.

In both Eritrea and Tigray, transport is likely to be the factor most critical to the extent and effectiveness of the relief operation during the coming months. However, many donor governments appear hesitant to provide trucks for these relief operations. With the exception of a few major relief agencies, governments are the only donors with sufficient funds to provide trucks for the cross border operations in the quantities required. Concerns that these trucks might be used for other than relief purposes can and should be allayed through consultation with other donors who have provided trucks and through discussion with ERA and REST.

Other channels for assistance

Government channels are at present limited. As mentioned previously, the government has since February 1988 had no physical presence in Tigray. In Eritrea, the government has put forward a proposal for massive airlifts to the capital at Asmara and other cities which has as yet met with a poor response from the donor community. Airlifting food is far more costly and inefficient than would be accessing Asmara from the port of Massawa. Areas south of the contested zone comprising Wollo and Gondar are served from the port of Assab.

In March of this year the first of several convoys operating under the banner of the Joint Relief Partnership moved north from Dessie towards Tigray. This establishment of the 'southern corridor operation' represented an important step forward in attempts to achieve a safe passage agreement for the free distribution of relief supplies in contested areas. Under the arrangement, negotiated independently between the JRP and the Ethiopian government's RRC and the JRP and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), food is moved from a government into a guerrilla held area under the auspices of the Catholic Church. The operation has run into some logistical difficulties in meeting its 14,500 metric ton per month goal, however.

While the JRP initiative has set an important precedent in the region, it must be noted that the program is both limited in scale and fragile in nature. Its success depends upon the willingness of both the Ethiopian government and the TPLF to allow its operation. The effectiveness of the initiative is also tied to the use of Assab, which is now the sole port of entry for all goods imported by Ethiopia including fertilizers, which are brought into the country in large quantities this time of year. Meanwhile, the joint forces of the TPLF and EPDM have recently voiced their concern that the operation has not expanded, stating in an April 30th statement that "the church organizations involved have very limited resources and have, for reasons we cannot understand, prevented other NGOs with resources from fully participating in the operations."

A longer term view

Of critical importance at this time is also the provision of rehabilitation assistance. While I am greatly encouraged by the rapid response of the U.S. Agency for International Development to this crisis and commend the U.S. Congress for its vigilance on this matter, I remain concerned that the focus is solely on emergency needs. In addition to helping people to survive during this period of acute shortage we must also work to ensure that they are able to cultivate during the coming seasons. In many cases, this requires assistance in the form of seeds, tools or livestock.

Rehabilitation assistance seems to evoke the same hesitant response as transport assistance; it would appear that in this highly-charged political situation donor governments place rehabilitation (and transport) assistance in the 'development' or 'political' category while relief aid remains a more neutral proposition. I would argue that time does not afford us the luxury of this debate. Providing food for hungry farmers without the trucks needed to deliver it is surely folly; providing food to keep farmers alive without helping them to provide for themselves is cynical. Research conducted by REST in the mid-1980s revealed that 67 percent of the farmers recording reduced harvests during the 1983-84 season had lost their livestock the previous year. The shortfall in rehabilitation assistance following the 1984-85 famine crisis was clearly a factor in the current crisis. It can be concluded that by failing to provide adequate rehabilitation assistance now we are paving the way for renewed famine.

Access to the port of Massawa

The utilization of the port of Massawa is obviously critical to the success of the current relief effort. However, it is important to accurately assess the effect that the capture of the port by the EPLF has had on the relief effort. Civilians living in guerrilla-held areas -- in fact, the majority of civilians in Eritrea and Tigray -- did not receive any food delivered through the port of Massawa before it changed hands; these people were accessed through Port Sudan to the cross-border network.

If the port were re-opened today, it would be possible to use it to serve the needs of these civilians and those remaining in government-held areas. In the weeks immediately following its capture of the port, the EPLF made clear to the international community its willingness to allow the use of the port for relief activities and to permit the United Nations to coordinate such activities. Late last month, the leadership of the EPLF again conveyed to the UN Secretary General its willingness to allow the full use of Massawa for relief activities designed to meet the needs of civilians in all parts of Eritrea and in Ethiopia. Specifically, the EPLF recommended: that the Asmara-Massawa road be open to relief convoys on certain days of the week and during specified hours; that a truce be agreed upon in the vicinity of Ghinda; and that the UN supervise the implementation of these and other arrangements. To date, the EPLF has not received a response from the United Nations.

The obstacle to re-opening the port of Massawa is the Ethiopian government, which contains to subject port facilities and the civilian population residing in the area to devastating air attacks and has stated its intention to re-capture the port at any cost. In a press statement released April 25th in response to the "Principles for Humanitarian Relief Efforts in Ethiopia" set forth by major donors, the Ethiopian government made clear that with respect to the relief effort it will go only so far as to increase the volume of aid moved through the southern corridor and allow airlifts to government-controlled towns. Government refusal to allow the UN to coordinate relief activities in Massawa is couched in a defense of the unity and territorial integrity of the country.

That the Ethiopian government should continue to employ national sovereignty as the justification for denying food to people it claims as its citizens is clearly unacceptable. As such, House Resolution 384, which specifically calls upon the President of the United States to oppose any favorable treatment of the Government of Ethiopia by the World Bank or IMF until such time as it accepts that specific principles should govern the relief effort, is to be commended. For the last several years, warring parties in the Horn of Africa have denied food to civilian populations and manipulated suffering to political ends. Often vocal in its condemnation, the international community has done little to fundamentally challenge this tendency.

While all efforts must be made to re-open the port of Massawa, however, it must be recognized that waiting for Mengistu to change his mind without bringing the cross-border operations up to full capacity will spell death for thousands of people. As such, assistance to the cross-border programs of ERA and REST must be immediately increased and sustained. Diplomatic efforts to convince the Ethiopian government to allow the use of Massawa should be pursued simultaneously. At the same time, efforts should be made to ensure that the 330,000 metric tons of supplies designated for arrival in Massawa at the time of its capture by the EPLF are or have been re-consigned to Port Sudan.

Recommendations

In general, I would strongly recommend that the Committee seek to encourage the United States government to move quickly in its response to the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of the region but also to provide emergency assistance in the context of a broader policy designed to promote equity and support conflict resolution in the region. Specifically, the Select Committee on Hunger and the United States government should:

1. **Explore further the implementation of the donor principles outlined in the "Statement of Principles for Humanitarian Relief Efforts in Ethiopia."** It should be noted that both the EPLF and TPLF have recently stated in writing their desire to see the UN play a coordinating role and their willingness to observe some sort of safe passage agreement. These organizations should be held accountable to their statements. So long as the Ethiopian government remains the primary obstacle to achieving agreement on the proposed principles, increased pressure must be brought to bear on the Mengistu regime.

2. **Expand and sustain assistance to the cross border operations in a comprehensive fashion.** In particular, support to the cross border programs should include not only food but also the provision of trucks, spare parts, fuel, storage, medical and other emergency relief supplies and administrative costs.

3. **Ensure that relief items originally consigned to the port of Massawa for delivery after 8 february 1990 have been or will be re-consigned to the Port Sudan.**

4. **Ensure the stability and, where possible, expansion of the JRP-sponsored 'southern corridor' initiative.** It is important, however, that the JRP channel be seen as a complement rather than alternative to the cross border operation.

5. **Undertake to provide basic rehabilitation assistance,** in particular seeds, tools and replacement livestock as necessary.

In the final analysis, famine in Ethiopia can only be thwarted when its people achieve a just and lasting peace. It is thus hoped that the U.S. Congress and Administration will explore and support conflict resolution measures in the region with a vigor equal to that which has characterized their response to recurrent famine.

Thank you.

[From Freedom in the World—1989-1990]

Ethiopia

Polity: Communist one-party (military dominiated)
Economy: Statist
Population: 48,470,000
Conflict: Secessionist-ethnic
PPP: $454
Life Expectancy: 39 male, 43 female
Ethnic Groups: Oromo, Amhara, Tigrean, Sidamo, Shankella, Somali

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Status: Not Free

Overview:

The regime of Lt. Col. Mengistu, who took power from long-time Emperor Haile Selassie in a 1974 coup and set up a Communist dictatorship, appears increasingly embattled. In 1989 his forces suffered embarrassing defeats by the Marxist Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which has been fighting a separatist war in Eritrea province since 1961, and by the Marxist Tigre People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has fought for Mengistu's removal since 1974. Before the regime and EPLF agreed on a cease fire, perhaps 40,000 government troops were killed, wounded or captured by the Tigrean rebels in 1989, and the army's best trained unit, the 102nd Airborne Division, was defeated in an TPLF offensive at Welo. Tigre province is now totally controlled by the 30,000 strong TPLF, which is in a position to cut the northern army's access to the Red Sea. In November 1989 Mengistu began to engage in peace-talks with the Tigrean rebels for the first time ever—which is regarded as a sign of his desperation. At the same time, he called for a national mobilization. Reports indicate that urban neighborhood groups have been ordered to produce sixty persons each for the war effort, and government officials have been undergoing special weapons training.

In May a coup attempt launched by key military figures wanting a negotiated end to the northern wars was snuffed out. According to one of the coup's planners, 680 officers have been arrested or executed since the attempt. This depletion of the officer corps has severely weakened the army and the war effort. Replacements are poorly trained, and the youths forcibly recruited to guard Addis Ababa are scared and tired of fighting. (Some youth resisting service have reportedly been executed.) In addition, the army is short on foreign support. Cuban troops that helped counter-attack the Somali invasion of the Ogaden in 1977 are no longer stationed in Ethiopia. Twelve hundred Soviet advisors have pulled out of the country, and Moscow is hinting at reducing military aid after the current agreement expires next year. (Since 1977 the Soviets have supplied some $11 billion in military aid.) A famine is expected in the north in early 1990. Famines occurred in 1984 and 1987—disasters caused as much by Stalinist agricultural policies and deliberate obstruction of relief supplies as by drought.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

The constitution provides for freedom of speech, press, assembly and peaceful demonstration, but in reality these freedoms are not respected. Public pronouncements by individuals are carefully monitored; several persons have been imprisoned for expressing antigovernment views. Books and journals have been confiscated when found to deviate from the government line. All media are government-owned and operated and serve as a mouthpiece for government policy. Assembly is allowed only with the government's permission, a policy backed up with stiff sanctions. Almost all demonstrations are government-organized, with many events calling for mandatory participation—again, a policy reinforced with stiff penalties. Some private associations are allowed to organize under close government watch. Academic freedom is curtailed; education is heavily politicized. In other areas, rights are also circumscribed. Government forces have been charged with bombing civilians in its war against Eritrean rebels. Torture, against which there are no specific constitutional protections, is a frequent post-arrest, anti-opposition tool. The constitutional provisions for lawful arrest and detention do not apply in practice, at least with regard to political dissidents. These persons are detained incommunicado, without charge or judicial review, and indefinitely, sometimes without even a pro forma trial. The judiciary is not independent in political cases. In 1988, political prisoners numbered between 2,000-3000. In a general amnesty, however, eighty-four political prisoners, along with the last three imprisoned royal family members and 820 common criminals, were released. A state of emergency in Tigre and Eritrea has, in effect, meant authorities can arrest and detain suspects at their whim.

FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA: 1990

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT RISK:	Total of 3.5 million: 2.1 million in Eritrea; 1.4 million in Tigray (see map).
ESTIMATED FOOD RELIEF NEEDED (FROM ALL DONORS, INCLUDING U.S.):	600,000 Metric Tons (MT) for FY90.
U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:	311,900 MT of food for FY90 at a cost of $125,000,000; 128,804 MT of food has arrived in Ethiopia. The remaining 183,096 MT is scheduled to arrive between May and August.
TOTAL FOOD RELIEF COMMITMENTS TO DATE FROM ALL DONORS:	500,000 MT.
FOOD AID STOCK AT PORT:	Approximately 30,000 MT at Assab and 60,000 MT in Port Sudan.

- Renewed drought in northern Ethiopia in 1989 led to an 85% crop loss in Eritrea and a 50% loss in Tigray.

- A February 1990 offensive launched by the EPLF in Eritrea shut down the main food delivery port of Massawa, jeopardizing food relief efforts.

- 3.5 million people are threatened by famine. An additional 500,000 in urban areas in Eritrea now may be at-risk because of recent fighting.

- The most pressing problem now is how to the deliver relief supplies to the 3.5 million people in Eritrea and Tigray, including 1 million people in government-held enclaves. Prior to the EPLF offensive on February 8, 1990, these areas had primarily been served by overland routes via Massawa.

- Somewhere between 500,000-2 million people in Eritrea and Tigray are reached by routes from the Sudan.

- However, 1.5-3 million people may still remain out of reach of relief. Their status is unclear. Only sketchy, isolated reports of their condition are available. Those reports indicate that some of the weakest--the youngest children, the oldest men and women--have already died.

- In March, a southern relief corridor was opened from the port of Assab through Dese into Tigray and Wollo. As of April 27, 6000 MT have been delived by truck by this route.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, May 2, 1990]

Marxist Ethiopia's Future Is Being Decided on the Battlefield

Popular discontent rises as rebels press Mengistu regime

By Robert M. Press

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

A VISITOR to one of the main hospitals here finds it overflowing with wounded young men, part of a stream of victims from the battlefields.

With peace talks stalled and rebels winning one battle after another. Ethiopians here and in other parts of the country are becoming more discouraged and desperate. And as Africa's oldest civil war drags on toward three decades, it is becoming a war of teenagers.

A father of a 16-year-old boy in high school begs foreign friends for help to send his son overseas – for education, and to avoid almost certain conscription into the Army.

In March, Ethiopia's military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam announced reforms of the country's political system. His speech, punctuated frequently with the term "comrades," invited "opposition groups accepting the democratic unity of Ethiopia" to join in "the political life of the country."

But this was clearly not a bid for multiparty democracy. The only opposition groups are rebels, and the main rebel group is seeking independence, not "unity."

"I don't think he [Mr. Mengistu] can be all that serious about democracy and stay on," says a

BETTY PRESS

KOREM, ETHIOPIA: *Waiting for emergency food aid. The civil war disrupts the economy and complicates famine relief. Korem is now in rebel-held territory.*

Mengistu has no intention of stepping down.

In private conversations, Ethiopians and diplomats from both the West and from Eastern Europe speculate about how long the government here will last. One Western diplomat gives the Mengistu regime only until the end of the year. Most observers agree that the government is not popular. "Ninety-nine percent of the people don't like the government," says one Ethiopian.

Nevertheless, the regime can still invoke the

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strong pull of nationalism. "[Mengistu's] appeal to nationalism is the only way he has survived," says a faculty member at the University of Addis Ababa, the nation's capital. After years of trying to play down the rebel threat, Mengistu is appealing to Ethiopians to not let the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) split the country by gaining independence for Eritrea. In March, Mengistu urged his countrymen to "not allow the destruction of [Ethiopia's] historical identity."

Mengistu knows his people may not like him; but he knows they like even less the idea of a divided Ethiopia. And diplomats say that if he lost control of Eritrea completely, he would probably be overthrown, perhaps by his own Army, or be pushed aside by top party officials.

Against a second major group of rebels, the Tigré People's Liberation Front (TPLF), who are seeking autonomy and his ouster, Mengistu has publicized the recent assertions by one of the TPLF leaders that the TPLF subscribes to a Stalinist philosophy and considers Albania a good model for government.

This frightens many Ethiopians, already unhappy with a decade and a half of Marxism forced upon them by their government. Though he is brutal at times, Mengistu is seen by many Ethiopians as the one man who can hold the country together. He survived an unsuccessful coup attempt last May, though many of his top officers were implicated. The failed coup left his military greatly weakened.

People fear what might come after Mengistu. One long-time resident here says people want to avoid a bloody transition to another regime, as happened in the long transition between the reign of the late Emperor Haile Selassie and the consolidation of Mengistu's regime in the 1970s.

But Mengistu's maneuvers and words aside, "the future of this country is being decided on the battlefield," a Western diplomat says. The TPLF now controls all of Tigré and areas to the south. In the northernmost province of Eritrea, the 120,000- to 130,000-member remnant of the government's second Army (described by analysts as the country's best and accounting for about half the country's remaining forces) have been cut off in Eritrea by EPLF attacks from getting overland reinforcements. Diplomats here in Addis doubt the Army can hold its position.

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Tesfai Ghermazien, an EPLF spokesman, claims thousands of government soldiers have been killed, wounded, or captured since the EPLF took the Eritrean port of Massawa in February.

According to diplomats, the government has bombed Massawa in an effort to retake the port. The EPLF claims the government has used cluster bombs and even napalm. Asked about that claim, a Western diplomat said: "They [the government] supposedly have them. We're not sure where they came from."

But a diplomat from another Western country says it is widely believed that Israel is "sending military aid and advisers into the hundreds" to Ethiopia. Israel denies sending cluster bombs. But Ethiopia and Israel did renew diplomatic relations several months ago. And Israeli officials have stated openly that they do not want to see Eritrea become an Arab stronghold.

An Eastern European diplomat here says "the timing was wrong" in Ethiopia's alleged request for Israeli help. The perception of Israeli support appears to have triggered increased military aid to Eritrea from several Arab countries, the diplomat said.

The Soviet Union is still the major supplier of military weapons to Ethiopia. But Soviet officials have said they do not intend to continue. "Increasingly, Soviet arms have been sustaining all sides in the fighting because demoralized Ethiopian forces lose control of much of the material they acquire, and it falls into the hands of their opponents," says Paul Henze of the RAND Corporation.

The government says it is ready for peace talks. But procedural terms have yet to be worked out with the TPLF. And the EPLF is balking at substantive talks, claiming the government refuses to allow the United Nations to participate as an observer. "The EPLF is not interested in talks until they've played their military card," says a diplomat here.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, May 4, 1990]

Food Relief Holdup Threatens Ethiopians

By Robert M. Press

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

DESSIE, ETHIOPIA

UNITED NATIONS CONVOY IN DESSIE, ETHIOPIA *This is the first convoy of food trucks to reach Mekele, capital of the rebel-controlled Tigre province to the north.*

ANOTHER major famine in northern Ethiopia can still be avoided – but just barely, say Ethiopian and Western relief officials and diplomats.

Drivers in the first truck convoys of international relief food reaching the heart of the drought area are returning with sobering eyewitness accounts.

"Mothers, children, aged people seem to be very hungry," United Nations driver Tesfay Mesfin says. He and 55 other drivers had just delivered the first grain to Mekele, the main town in Tigre, a province now almost entirely in rebel hands. Rebel territory starts just 25 miles north of this government-held town.

"Some people were wearing rags, and might have come from other villages" in search of food, says Mr. Tesfay, standing beside his now-empty truck. "People were excited when they saw the trucks. They were clapping their hands."

Tesfay then drove to the series of giant tent storage shelters where Ethiopian laborers loaded the trucks with 100-pound bags of wheat from the United States and other countries for the next convoy.

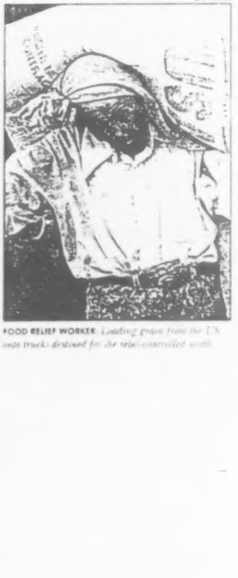
Much more food is needed quickly, by land and air. Several Ethiopian churches have formed the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP), which reached an agreement with Tigre rebels earlier this year to allow unarmed, unescorted truck convoys to haul food from government-controlled areas to drought-hit rebel areas.

Relief officials hope that a famine will be avoided with the combination of food delivered through this town, other food sent into rebel areas from neighboring Sudan, and additional help via an airlift or through the rebel-held port of Massawa.

But US Rep. Tony Hall (D) of Ohio, chairman of a congressional committee on hunger, said that Yilma Kassaye, head of Ethiopia's relief agency, showed no interest in a military truce.

"Clearly they put military victory above saving the lives of people," Mr. Hall said in an interview with the Associated Press.

But "it's not too late to avert a famine," says John Wiater, country representative for the private, US-based Catholic Relief Services, a key relief and development agency operating in Ethiopia. "Hunger is acute. ... But we believe getting food in [to Eritrea and Tigre] will avert a famine."



FOOD RELIEF WORKER: *Loading grain from the US onto trucks destined for the rebel-controlled north.*

The rainy season expected to begin in June is likely to slow truck convoys, JRP relief officials here say. And they need more trucks, and bridge and road repairs. "It's within the power of both sides fighting in northern Ethiopia to determine whether food gets to those people or not," says Willard Pearson Jr., director of the Ethiopian office of the US Agency for International Development, which is a major relief provider.

But fighting, politics, and pride are slowing relief efforts, according to Ethiopian, rebel, UN, and Western relief officials and diplomats.

A prime example is the debate over use of Massawa, the port closest to the estimated 3 million drought victims in the war zones.

The port fell to the Eritrean rebels in February. Since then, the government has failed to take it back and is refusing to let relief supplies be delivered via the port. Rebels say they are ready to deliver relief supplies from the port to drought victims.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has called on the government to allow the port to be used for relief deliveries. The other Ethiopian port, at Aseb, is much further from the drought area.

The fall of Massawa sent political shock waves through the country. Before the fall, Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam called it a decisive battle over the future of Eritrea, which has been fighting for nearly three decades to gain its independence.

Allowing relief operations through Massawa (now under rebel control) could further weaken the government's claim over the city, and further undermine the government's stability.

United Nations official Timothy Painter, who directs relief operations for the UN in Ethiopia, says: "Without that route [Massawa], it would indeed be very difficult to get enough food into the area."

Mr. Kassaye says Ethiopia wants donors to airlift food from the port of Aseb to Asmera, the main city of Eritrea, which is still in government hands. An estimated 400,000 persons are stranded in and around Asmera, cut off by the rebels.

But a Western diplomat in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, calls the government's insistence on an airlift "blackmail." Why, he asks, should donors be asked to pay for such an expensive operation just so the government can continue to refuse to acknowledge rebel control over Massawa? "The donors are fed up," he says.

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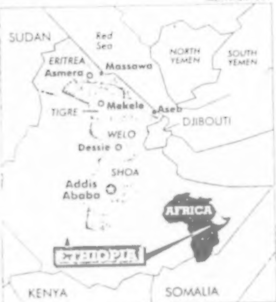
Food deliveries from Sudan directly into rebel-controlled Eritrea and Tigre are jeopardized by government threats to bomb the trucks. They are forced to travel only at night, slowing deliveries considerably. The government may suspect rebels are delivering military supplies.



Neither the UN nor any other neutral organization has set up a cross-border delivery system, as the UN has for war zones in neighboring Sudan. UN and Western relief officials, in fact, won't even speak on the record about cross-border deliveries to avoid irritating the government.

Ethiopians belonging to churches represented by the JRP plan to help monitor food distribution in the Tigre rebel areas. So far, the JRP has no agreement to deliver food to Eritrea rebel areas.

A number of donor countries, including Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, US, and the 12 nations in the European Community, issued a statement of principles last week on humanitarian aid. The statement called on all parties to the civil war in Ethiopia to stop fighting immediately and to guarantee safe passage and distribution of relief supplies through neutral organizations.

Ethiopia's armed forces are the largest in black Africa, numbering 315,800.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies, based in London, estimates the Eritrean rebel force at 30,000, and the Tigreans at 20,000.

This is the second in a three-part series. Part one ran May 2.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, May 7, 1990]

Ethiopian Economy Idles Despite Radical Moves

By Robert M. Press

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

A SUNDAY soccer match at the main city stadium is jammed with fans cheering wildly as a military team loses to a civilian one. And a few blocks away, at the national theater, a show of traditional and modern Ethiopian music sells out at $3 a ticket.

But on a back street, a mother of two, living in a one-room stick-and-mud hovel about the size of a double bed, with no water, electricity, heat, toilet, or window, explains that she earns only 25 to 50 cents a day selling vegetables. Her earnings are typical of many poor families here.

"When I get just 25 cents we have only bread to eat," she says. "I'm living from hand to mouth."

Two months after the government's dramatic announcement that Ethiopia was abandoning Marxist socialism in favor of a freer economy and possible political change, the economic life in this crowded, hilly city goes on pretty much as normal – both for those who have money and for those who don't.

In his March speech, Ethiopian strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam said the country's "failure to give due attention to the private sector" has had a negative effect on the economy. Citing a "world today . . . far different from the world" 15 years ago when Ethiopia adopted Marxist ideology, Mr. Mengistu called for a reduced government role in the economy and more private enterprise.

Outsiders often are surprised to find that many shops in this city are privately owned.

And most farm production comes from land individually farmed, rather than from state farms.

Mengistu is calling for unlimited private investment, the right to buy and rent houses, and an end to cumbersome government controls on farming and agricultural marketing.

He says farmland will remain state property but farmers will have legal use rights to the land and the right to transfer such use to heirs.

The changes will not be complete, though, as the state will continue to "direct" the economy and run a number of enterprises.

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PRIVATE ENTERPRISE: *The key to reviving Ethiopia's economy and agriculture.*

With the lifting of government marketing controls, the retail price of some grains has fallen sharply.

In many rural areas, the announcement of reforms has brought chaos – and violence.

Angry farmers are said to have killed a number of government officials. These officials were working in state agencies that forced farmers to sell their crops through them, often at prices below the market.

With the March announcement that the agencies would be abolished, anger pent up for years has been released.

Many farmers are reclaiming land taken from them through various government farming schemes. "Things have gotten a little ugly," says a Western development official.

ETHIOPIA

A three-part series.

An Ethiopian source puts it more bluntly: If the government doesn't come up with detailed plans on how to make the transition from state-run to a freer farming system by June, "this place [Ethiopia] could explode."

"There's been a proclamation, and nothing else," said an Ethiopian man, as he stepped out of a taxi-van.

Another Ethiopian said that a move away from Marxism was not enough. "Total change" is needed, he says, explaining that he meant Mengistu should be replaced.

International donors and diplomats take the government's proposed changes seriously, but offer various assessments about the motives behind them.

Mengistu was pushed into announcing the changes by a reform bloc in the Politburo, an Eastern European diplomat says. He adds that Mengistu may not be able to carry them out. "He's a hard-liner: a military man. He lacks political flexibility."

"What Mengistu is trying to do is play a shell game. He's trying to pretend this is Eastern Europe," a Western diplomat says.

A "top-down" economic reform, with the same man staying in power, is far from what's happening in Eastern Europe, he adds.

Desperation at gradually losing the civil war is forcing Mengistu's hand, he says, but changes such as seeking more foreign investment are impractical while fighting rages.

But an international donor official disagrees with most of that view. The idea that Ethiopia is making the changes only to "garner external assistance in a desperate economic and military situation is only 25 percent correct," he says.

The other 75 percent of the reason is that the reforms are an "evolution of a process that began in 1987," he adds.

Parts of Ethiopia produce agricultural surpluses, but experts think the country could produce more with less strict government control.

This is the last in a three-part series. Parts 1 and 2 appeared May 2 and 4.

[From the Associated Press, May 1, 1990]

GOVERNMENT, REBEL FORCES BATTLE AS ERITREAN WAR ENTERS DECISIVE STAGE

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer has just ended a nine-day journey behind rebel lines in Eritrea. Because of lack of transmission facilities, his story could not be filed until he left Eritrea.

An AP Extra
By REID G. MILLER=
Associated Press Writer=

MASSAWA, Ethiopia (AP) Day and night, heavy artillery and tank barrages thunder along a 90-mile front, in what might be the decisive battle of the nearly 30-year-old Eritrean civil war, Africa's longest-running conflict.

The battle raging between Ethiopian government troops and Eritrean rebels in Ethiopia's northernmost province is possibly the most destructive conflict in the world today, resulting in thousands of casualties on both sides.

The rebels appear to have the upper hand in the fighting along what is called the Ghinda front. So fierce are the artillery and tank exchanges that their distant rumble can be heard clearly in the strategic Red Sea port of Massawa, about 37 miles away.

Massawa, now in rebel hands, was the target of six Ethiopian air raids in April by Soviet-built MiG fighters. Rebel spokesmen say at least 110 people, many of them civilians, have been killed in the cluster bomb attacks.

The antagonists in the fight are the Marxist government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam and rebel forces dominated by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which seek independence for the province of 3.5 million people. The Eritrean Front is considered left-leaning, but its leaders say they reject any political identification tag.

The government forces' immediate objective is to recapture Massawa, one of only two Ethiopian Red Sea harbors that have traditionally handled most of the country's trade and international relief supplies for millions of famine victims.

The port was captured by the Eritreans on Feb. 11, three days after they launched a majo new offensive in their 29-year-old war of secession.

The rebels have their sights set on a bigger objective the capture of their ancient, hallowed provincial capital of Asmara and the end to a conflict that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The Ghinda front straddles the only road from Asmara to Massawa, a two-lane ribbon of asphalt stretching 62 miles.

The Addis Ababa government has issued few war communiques, but in a rare pronouncement acknowledged last Friday that the battle had ``reached a decisive final stage.''

The last previous government statement on the conflict came in mid-February, shortly after the fall of Massawa to the rebels.

At that time, Mengistu told parliament that failure to recapture Massawa would mean the loss of his 2nd Revolutionary Army, Asmara, and Eritrea itself.

That now seems likely.

Mengistu's 2nd Army, more than 100,000 strong, representing almost a third of Ethiopia's military strength, is virtually surrounded in the highlands around Asmara. Its only remaining supply route is a tenuous air link from government-held territory far to the south and east.

Another major rebel force, the Tigre People's Liberation Front, has tied up Mengistu's remaining armies in an offensive that has taken the Tigreans to within 100 miles of the capital of Addis Ababa. The Tigreans are seeking Mengistu's ouster.

The Ethiopian government claims, and the Eritrean rebels freely acknowledge, that the two offensives by the separate rebel forces have been coordinated. The Tigrean rebels began their offensive last August, sweeping south and east out of their stronghold of Tigre Province, just south of Eritrea.

Isayas Afeworki, the general secretary of the Eritrean rebel movement, says his strategy is to bleed Mengistu's 2nd Army dry on the Ghinda front, then retake the offensive.

''There is no hope for the dergue (government) to take back Massawa,'' Afeworki said. ''I think what they are doing is motivated by desperation.''

A new offensive, aimed at Asmara from the south, already is under way, but it is unclear if it is being pursued by the Eritreans or the Tigreans.

Ethiopia claims a Tigrean force has pushed northward, overrunning three government garrisons south of Asmara and behind the Ghinda front. The Eritreans claim the new move as their own.

On the Ghinda front, Afeworki said the Ethiopian army had made three major attempts to retake Massawa in the past month, but described it as ''a futile, suicidal effort.''

Afeworki and other rebel leaders said the 2nd Army's only access to the lowland plains leading to the Red Sea is through a few, narrow mountain roads that are easy to choke.

''They have to get through our artillery, tank and mortar fire, then our minefields. Then our fighters pop up out of their bunkers and chew up those that remain,'' Afeworki said.

The rebels claim they have inflicted some 13,000 casualties on government forces in nearly a month of fighting along the Ghinda front, including 6,000 killed. They don't talk in specific numbers about their own losses, but Afeworki said they were less than a tenth of the government's.

Ethiopia's armed forces are the largest in black Africa, numbering 315,800. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, based in London, estimates the Eritrean rebel force at 30,000, and the Tigreans at 20,000.

The government and the rebels have made exaggerated battlefield claims which cannot be independently verified. But there is no doubt about the ferocity of the fighting.

In recent testimony to a Senate committee in Washington, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Herman J. Cohen, described the conflict as ''possibly the largest in terms of combatants and the most destructive in the world today.''

The intensified fighting follows two unsuccessful rounds of peace talks held late last year between government and rebel emissaries under the mediation of former President Jimmy Carter in Nairobi, Kenya, and Atlanta.

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS IN ETHIOPIA

WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES, NORWAY, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, DO HEREBY CALL UPON ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT TO OBSERVE STRICTLY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES TO ENSURE SPEEDY AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO THE VICTIMS OF DROUGHT AND CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA IN ORDER TO PREVENT LARGE-SCALE STARVATION.

WE STRONGLY URGE ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT:

1. TO SUSPEND HOSTILITIES IMMEDIATELY TO FACILITATE RELIEF OPERATIONS, BEARING IN MIND THAT THE SITUATION OF INTERNAL CONFLICT IS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORT;

2. TO GUARANTEE THE SAFE-PASSAGE AND FACILITATE DISTRIBUTION OF HUMANITARIAN RELIEF SUPPLIES VIA LAND, SEA AND AIR THROUGH NEUTRAL CHANNELS SUCH AS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCHES OR OTHER NGO'S;

3. TO RECOGNIZE THE COORDINATING ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN RELATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORT;

4. TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF THE RELEVANT PORTS AND AIRFIELDS AND THE ASSOCIATED ROAD LINKS FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF ACTIVITIES; AND

5. TO REFRAIN FROM MILITARY ATTACK ON AIRCRAFT, SHIPS AND ROAD VEHICLES DELIVERING HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES, THUS ENSURING THE SAFE PASSAGE OF FOOD DELIVERIES THROUGH ALL POSSIBLE CHANNELS.

ALL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL BE UNDERTAKEN FULLY RESPECTING THE PRINCIPLES ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO GOVERN SUCH OPERATIONS.

WE CALL UPON ALL DONORS TO RESPOND GENEROUSLY TO ALL ELEMENTS OF THE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF PROGRAM, INCLUDING MEASURES NECESSARY TO REESTABLISH NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF PORT AND AIRFIELD FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED ROAD LINKS.

RECALLING THAT THIS SITUATION OF CONFLICT IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE SERIOUS HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA, WE SOLEMNLY APPEAL MOST STRONGLY TO ALL PARTIES TO RESUME THEIR EFFORTS FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND, TO THIS END, TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING PROCEDURAL DIFFICULTIES ON THE BASIS OF FLEXIBILITY, AND TO PROCEED TO SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING A LASTING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.